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In the Reign of Queen Dick

Carolyn Wells

515
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ced Katharine

9th March 1896

Dear

Mr. [unclear]

Am. 1/2/96

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

BY
CAROLYN WELLS

ILLUSTRATED BY W. STROTHMANN



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MCMIV

TO
MY LITTLE FRIEND
RUTH PRATT

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IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

CHAPTER I

THE SANDMAN

THE twins were just the nicest, happiest children you ever saw; and they were so fond of fun they could get it out of anything—from a picnic to a rainy day.

At the time I'm telling you about Bob was seven years old, so of course Betty was, too, and it was after six o'clock, and they were sitting before the fire waiting for the summons to go to bed.

I say sitting, but really Betty was lounging on the big white bearskin rug, and Bob was tumbling from a chair down to the floor and then tumbling up again.

They didn't know why nurse hadn't come

THE SANDMAN

"What a silly idea that is," said Bob, thoughtfully. "The Sandman! As if I would let anybody come and throw sand in my eyes!"

"Oh, ho, young man! Is that your tune?" cried a strange voice, and Bob and Betty jumped as if they were shot. "Oh, ho! You don't believe there is a Sandman, don't you? Well, then, pray, who am I?"

On the rug between the children stood a queer-looking figure.

He was something like a Brownie, and something like a gnome, and something like an elf, and on his back was strung a sack which appeared to be heavily filled.

With a chuckling laugh he took handfuls of sand from his sack and flung them straight into the children's faces.

"Oh, ho," he laughed again, "you don't believe in a Sandman, don't you?"

Now Betty was a very gentle little girl, and so she said:

"Oh, please, Mr. Sandman, stop throwing sand at me, and I'll promise always to believe in you forever 'n' ever."

THE SANDMAN

very long bills, and they tooted and twittered till Bob and Betty had to clap their hands over their ears.

"Fine, aren't they?" said the Sandman, looking at the birds in great admiration.

"What are they for?" said Bob, who was of an inquiring turn of mind.

"Heralds," said the Sandman, briefly.

"Please tell us more, sir," said Betty, who was very wheedlesome, and the Sandman went on:

"They're sandpipers, you know, and they herald my approach when I return to the Land of Nod. Would you like to hear my sandpipers pipe?"

"Yes, indeed!" cried both children. And then all the sandpipers began to pipe a beautiful tune. It was like a bugle, and a pair of bagpipes, and a flute, and a fife, and a piccolo all in one. And as the sandpipers piped they flew out of the window, and somehow the Sandman and Bob and Betty all flew after them.

"Woof!" cried Bob, for it almost took his

THE SANDMAN

inal Sandman, and his two honored guests!
What ho! What ho! What ho! ho! ho!"

"Enter the gates, my young friends, enter the gates," cried the Sandman, who was dancing about in glee; "you are welcome to the Land of Nod. Enter, enter."

"I will go in," said Bob, who was a practical boy, "if you will promise me that I may come out whenever I choose."

"Certainly my boy, certainly," said the Sandman; "but I think you'll be in no hurry to leave."

"I will go in," said Betty, "if you promise me I'll like it."

"Yes, indeed, little lady, you'll like it well, I assure you."

So Bob and Betty followed the Sandman as he marched up to the great gate, between the long lines of sandpipers, who were piping all the time.

"Why do you keep the gate locked, sir?" said Bob, in his usual straightforward way.

"So that no one can get in unless I choose to let them," replied the Sandman. "Many

THE SANDMAN

ing sand into his sack, and when it was full he slung it over his shoulder, and with a smiling face, exclaimed:

“Good-by, good-by; go ahead.”

Then Bob and Betty felt themselves gently pushed quite inside the great gate, and heard it clang to behind them.

Turning quickly, and peeping through the bars, they saw the Sandman scurrying away, followed by his flock of sandpipers.

He looked back, waved his hand, and shouted: “Go ahead; good-by!” and then they saw him no more.

“Go ahead!” exclaimed Bob; “where are we to go ahead to, I’d like to know?”

But Betty was already going ahead.

“Come along, Bob,” she cried, as she scampered away. “If this is the Land of Nod, I’m going to see it all. This part is like a big garden, and it’s lovely. Come, look at these flowers.”

“But it’s so dark,” said Bob, as he followed his sister.

“Oh, no, not dark,” said Betty; “it’s just

THE SANDMAN

Land of Nod, and we don't know quite which way to go."

"Then I'm just the one to tell you," said the deep, soft voice again. And with a quick motion the Knight pushed up his visor.

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

"Indeed I will," said the Knight, as his black gauntlet closed on the baby fingers; "you're just the sort of children I like to take through the Land of Nod. And as we're here, I'll show you first our Night Nursery. This is my especial charge, and I'm really proud of it."

"Is it always so dark here?" asked Bob, for the dusky shadows were deepening, and nothing could be seen very distinctly.

"Darker," said the Knight; "this is about as light as it ever is, except when the Man in the Moon comes around. But you'll soon get accustomed to it, and then you can see quite well."

He spoke truly, for as the twins looked about them their eyes grew used to the twilight, and they saw what looked like rows of little beds and cots, each filled with lovely blossoms.

"These beds are all flower-beds," explained the Knight of the Night, "but of course they only contain night flowers. The evening primroses, as you noticed, are just waking up.

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

They approached a gorgeous bed, made of carved ivory and draped with silken curtains.

"This," said the Knight, "is a most marvelous rare flower. It is a night-blooming cereus, and a fine specimen of its kind. But it is a conceited and pompous flower, and of a most prickly disposition, so beware how you offend it."

Of course Bob and Betty had no intention of offending the beautiful blossom, and they watched with silent delight as it raised its great pink head from its silken pillow and lazily uncurled its petals.

"Why don't you say something?" it cried suddenly, and two long green arms darted forth as if to shake the surprised children.

These arms were nothing more or less than thick cactus stems, but they were covered with prickly bristles, and the cereus brandished them about in a threatening manner.

"Can't you talk?" he continued, shaking his pink head angrily, and writhing around on his cactus stems.

"There, there, Cereus," said the Knight of

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

"Well, you know," said the cereus, "flowers have feelings; and, for that matter, vegetables are also sensitive."

"Vegetables sensitive!" cried Bob. "I never dreamed of such a thing!"

"Well, just learn these lines by heart," said the cereus, "and it may help you to remember some valuable advice."

Bob and Betty folded their little hands and listened attentively while the cereus recited the following lines:

"'Tis oft instilled in children's minds
To animals one should be kind.
Another lesson I'd teach you,
Be kind to vegetables too.

"When in the fields you stroll at morn,
Oh, do not tweak the ears of corn.
And pray do not express surprise
At casts in the potatoes' eyes.

"The cabbages do not berate
Because they stay in bed so late.
Nor by the peas let it be seen
That you consider them quite green.

"If oyster-plants are standing by,
Speak not of oyster stew or fry.

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

“And they would sigh with envy and say, ‘Oh, pray explain
What makes your crops so fine and large in spite of sun or
rain?’

The kind old farmer chuckled, and shook his grizzled head.

‘I’ll tell you what’s the reason, if you want to know,’ he said.

“‘It’s only that I’m kind to them and give them what they
want.

I look out for the little needs of everything I plant.

I see that my potatoes have glasses for their eyes,

And all my long-necked squashes I buy collars for and ties.

“‘My strawberries I cheerfully provide with folding-beds,

My cabbages and lettuces have hats to fit their heads.’

Again the farmer chuckled, as he said, ‘And so, you see,

I do my very best for them—they do their best for me.’”

“He was a nice man,” said Bob; “but I
never thought before that vegetables cared
whether we were kind to them or not. People
are different, you know.”

“Not so very different,” said the cereus,
“and flowers are the most sensitive of all. If
you’re rude or impolite to a flower, he never
forgets it.

“So never pull a cattail,

Do not a dogrose tease;

And never mention cockscomb

To ragged-sailors, please.

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

"Perhaps not," said the Knight of the Night, "but remember his prickly nature. He can't help being sharp-tempered, you know."

"No, I s'pose not," said Betty, "but he ought to try."

"Perhaps he does try," said the Knight.

"Yes, perhaps," said Betty. And just then she spied what seemed to be a huge fleecy white heap of clouds rolling away toward the horizon.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "how beautiful! What are they?"

"Watch them," said the Knight.

So Bob and Betty watched, and as they looked the cloudlike masses became clearer, and they saw they weren't clouds at all, but a large number of white horses, whose riders were draped in floating white robes.

"Who are they?" asked Bob, as he saw the white steeds gallop away.

"Those are the thousand and one Arabian Knights," answered the Knight of the Night, smiling down at the children. "They're just the bravest and best knights in the world, and they have the finest horses."

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

"I'm frightened," said Betty, in a scared little voice, upon which the Arabian Knight nearest her picked her up, and cuddling her in his white draperies, seated her on his horse in front of himself, and away they went. The same thing happened to Bob, but Betty didn't know it, and so both children were being whirled along over sandy roads far from the Night Nursery.

"Where are we going?" asked Betty of the kind Arabian Knight who was carefully holding her.

"I am going to Arabia," replied the Knight, "but you may be set down wherever you choose."

"Are we still in the Land of Nod?" asked Betty.

"Oh, yes," said the Knight; "we're nearing the Maze. Haven't you been in the Maze yet?"

"No," said Betty; "we've just come."

"Oh, then, of course you'll want to see the Maze," said the Arabian Knight; "so I think I'd better leave you here at the Maze entrance."

THE KNIGHT OF THE NIGHT

may go, but I can't go with you. That is, I can't go now, as I have to run back and wind up the four-o'clocks and give the pussy-willows some milkweed. But I'll join you later. So good-by for now."

And, with a kind smile and a low bow, the Knight of the Night stalked away.

THE MAZE

same soft voice which had bade them enter, and now the children could discern a beautiful lady in a long, lovely white robe. She had a sweet face crowned with golden hair, on which rested a wreath of white poppies.

"I am La Sonnambula," she said to the wondering children, "and I am glad to see you. What are your names?"

"We are Bob and Betty," said Bob, taking his sister's hand, "and, if you please, we'd like to see the Maze. But it's not very light."

"Oh, I can see pretty well," said Betty, who feared the sweet-faced lady might be offended.

"We'll arrange that," said La Sonnambula, as she touched a bell, which gave out a muffled tone.

In response to this summons a handmaiden appeared, rubbing her eyes as if just awakened from a nap.

"Drowsibel," said her mistress, "send me two guides, if you please. And bid them appear immediately."

"Yes, mistress," said Drowsibel, who courtesied and disappeared.

THE MAZE

kitten, I'd be glad to find one. Where are they?"

"Oh, they're all over. But mostly they live in the Fuss-and-Feather trees. They build their nests there, and if they're left undisturbed they stay there all the year round. But you must remember there isn't a word of sense in what I'm saying. I'm talking in my sleep, you know. I always do. But, of course, I have to, as I'm never awake."

"Can't we waken you?" asked Bob.

"Oh, no. And it wouldn't be worth while, anyway, for I'd only drop right off again. And now I'm getting more sound asleep, so I sha'n't even be able to talk to you any longer. If you'll excuse me, I'll take a nap on this couch. The guides will be here in a moment to look after you. Farewell, we shall meet again."

With a light kiss on the forehead of each child, La Sonnambula moved softly to a bed of roses near by, and gracefully sinking down upon it, was soon peacefully sleeping.

"Isn't she queer?" said Bob, in an undertone; but Betty said: "I think she is lovely,

THE MAZE

tern will guide you younkers hither and yon, as ye may list."

"We are ready to follow," said Betty, prettily; but even as she spoke Will o' the Wisp was gone.

"Well, he's a funny guide," said Bob.

"Oh, he's always like that," said Jack o' Lantern; "he comes and goes as he chooses. But he's a good fellow. You'll like him when you know him better."

"I like him now," said Betty; "he's so pretty and graceful."

"Oh, dost think so?" said Will o' the Wisp, suddenly appearing before her and brandishing his torch as he bowed low. "Thank you, little miss; I'll guide you well, I promise. Come, brother, let us start."

"I'm ready," said Jack o' Lantern, and the four trotted away.

They walked hand in hand, Bob and Betty in the middle, with the guides on either side, and as the road was quite wide enough for four, they went merrily along.

"I say," said Jack o' Lantern, when they

THE MAZE

"Well, tell them," said Jack o' Lantern, settling himself comfortably on the grassy bank.

"Why, you see," Will o' the Wisp began, "the old butter-maker stopped making butter, so he left lots of stone crocks here by the river-side. And the river rose, and the water came up all around the stone crocks, and they were half buried in mud, so they became stone crocodiles. They're fierce and unmannerly reptiles and I most greatly fear them."

"Nonsense," said Jack o' Lantern, sleepily, "they're not dangerous a bit."

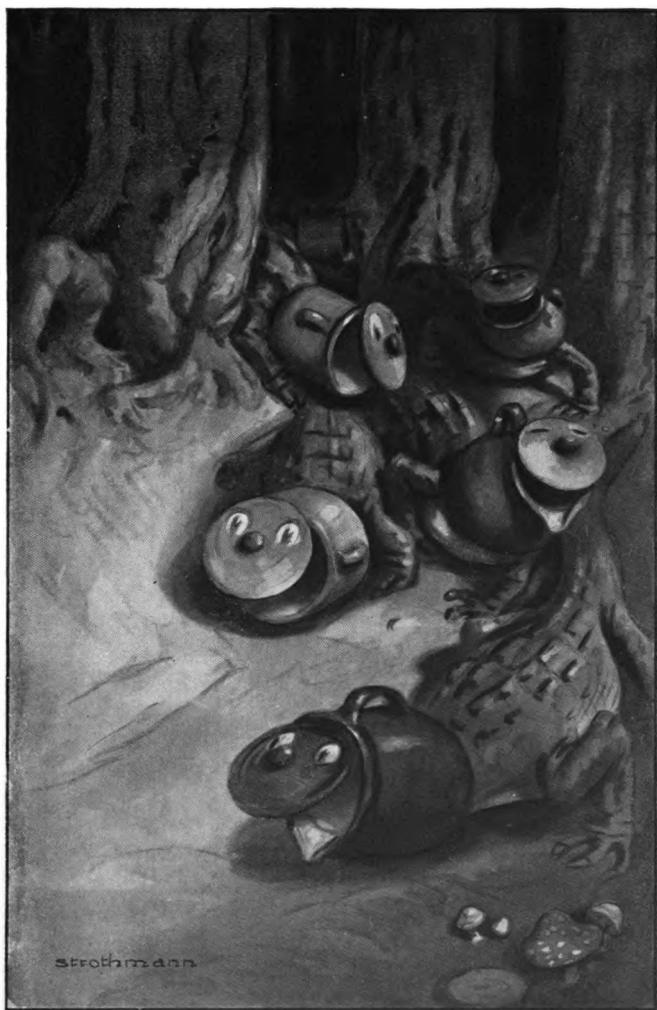
"They're not, aren't they?" cried Will o' the Wisp, angrily; "I'll just show you!"

In his usual sudden way he disappeared, and Bob and Betty felt a tiny bit timid as they awaited his return.

"Stone crocodiles can't hurt us, can they?" Betty asked of Jack o' Lantern; but as he had gone to sleep he made no reply.

"Oh, Bob," cried Betty, "Jack o' Lantern's asleep, and his candle is out. That's what makes it so dark. Oh, Bob, I *am* scared."

"Don't be frightened, sister," said Bob,



The approach of the stone crocodiles.

THE MAZE

torch. "Go, the guests approve you not. And you'd better go, anyway, for over the hill approacheth an arch enemy."

The stone crockodiles marched sadly away, with stony faces, but shedding crocodiles' tears as they went.

"I'm sorry you hurt their feelings, Bob," said Betty.

"That mattereth not," said Will o' the Wisp. "They're very thick-skinned, and besides 'tis well they departed, for here comes the Tin Cangaroos, and the two families are dire foes. You see, the Tin Cans are so much more modern and fashionable than the stone crocks that, of course, they look down on each other. Approach, my friends."

Then a great number of Tin Cangaroos came hopping up, and Bob and Betty screamed in glee at their appearance. Their bodies were tin cans of all sorts. The paper labels were still on them, and proved them to be tomato-cans, soup-cans, fruit-cans, and, indeed, cans of all sorts.

Their heads, legs, and tails were just like

THE MAZE

With a yell of dismay the Tin Kangaroos fled, and as they disappeared a pack of Sauce Panthers came stalking up to take their places.

These beasts were funnier than the others, for their bodies were great saucepans, of which the long straight handles formed their tails.

They had little heads and paws, just like the ordinary panthers you have in your homes, and they waddled as they walked.

“Can they sing, too?” said Bob.

“Ask them,” said the Will o’ the Wisp; and Bob said, politely:

“Can you sing, oh, good Sauce Panthers, and if so, will you kindly favor us?”

The Sauce Panthers gave a sort of a low growl in chorus, and then began:

“Oh, Sauce Panthers love in the woods to prowl,
They prowl and growl, and yowl, and howl,
And gr-r-rowl, and yow-ow-owl, and how-how-howl-l.”

The growlings and howlings and yowlings became so deep and so loud that Bob and Betty clasped each other’s hands and looked a little scared.

THE MAZE

"Yes," said Will o' the Wisp, "'tis day after to-morrow. Come, for now we be going farther into the Maze with these children. We're guides for them, don't you remember?"

He touched Jack o' Lantern's nose with his torch, which seemed to help Jack to find his wits.

"All right," he said, "all right, I'm ready. Come on." And, starting off at a smart pace, they all went on.

THE MAN IN THE MOON

know, and yet you know you're here. Well, if you know you're here, you can't be lost, can you? Nothing's lost if you know where it is."

This sounded plausible enough, but Bob didn't at all like the idea of being lost in the Maze, so he said:

"Well, then, if you don't know the way, we don't either; we must hunt about till we find it. Let's go straight ahead on this path and see where it brings us out."

They went ahead for a short distance, but soon they came up against a high stone wall, which was right across the path and extended on either hand as far as they could see.

"Why, this must be the outside wall of the Maze," said Bob.

"Nay, not so," said Will o' the Wisp, "for there be many of these walls. You'll find yourself running up against them full often."

"What do we do, then?" asked Betty.

"Then you have to go back to where the road branches, and try a different path," said Jack o' Lantern. "Which way, sir?" he added, turning to Bob, whom he now seemed to recog-

THE MAN IN THE MOON

ing closer to her brother. "I wish Will o' the Wisp would come back." But he didn't come, and after a while even brave Bob began to feel worried.

"It's all right, Betty," he said, bravely, "and if we wait patiently I'm sure somebody will come."

"Heyday, children," spoke out a familiar voice, and with a flash and a twinkle, Will o' the Wisp stood before them. "I have an errand or two to look after, but I'll join you again anon. Meanwhile if you want assistance, call for the Man in the Moon." Then, with a dainty tripping step, Will o' the Wisp danced about and began to sing:

"The Man in the Moon may be awkward and tall;

But never mind that.

Some say that he isn't good-looking at all;

But never mind that.

"I assure you he'll prove a most trustworthy friend;

If you are in trouble, his help he will lend,

If you are perplexed, good advice he will send,

But never mind that."

"Is that all, sir?" said Betty as Will o' the Wisp stopped singing.

THE MAN IN THE MOON

called out a cheery voice; and, sure enough, the Man in the Moon stood before them.

There was no doubt as to his identity, for his face was a perfect moon, full, round, and shining, and his expression was so merry and kind that the children ran to him at once and grasped his hands.

He was very tall and slim, and it was all the twins could do to reach his hands, which hung loosely at his sides.

Indeed, he was very loosely hung together at every joint, and he wobbled about a good deal; but his great shining face beamed so pleasantly at them that Bob and Betty felt as if they had always known him.

"We wanted you to come," Bob called up to him, for the bright moon-face was far above them, "because Will o' the Wisp went away and Jack o' Lantern's candle went out, and——"

"And we were lonesome in the dark," concluded Betty, frankly, as Bob hesitated.

"Yes, yes," said the Man in the Moon, thoughtfully. "Well, now, let me see, let me see. I have it! I should advise you to put on

THE MAN IN THE MOON

"Dear me," said the Man in the Moon, almost petulantly, "haven't you anything at all? I never saw such destitute children. Haven't even a wheelbarrow?"

"No," said Bob; "why should we have a wheelbarrow?"

"Don't be silly," said the Man in the Moon. "Now, I've only time to give you one more piece of advice. I've an engagement to-night to light a garden-party, and I must be off."

"Oh, don't leave us!" cried Betty. "But if you do, can't we go with you?"

"Certainly," said the Man in the Moon, kindly; "if I leave you, you may go with me. When shall we start?"

"Now," said Betty, who was always a prompt child.

"Oh, there's no hurry," said the Man in the Moon, "and besides I said I'd advise you once more. Now, this is my best bit of advice, and I hope you'll always remember it. If you are a bear, growl. There, no one could give you better advice than that."

"No, sir, I suppose not," said Betty. "Will

THE MAN IN THE MOON

turned his back on the children, and immediately all the brightness and light were gone, and the place was dark and gloomy.

Then he whirled back again and faced them, and all was light again.

"Or I can turn gradually," he said, and then he turned slowly round, so that the light kept growing fainter until it was dark, and then brighter until it was again as light as day.

"So, you see," the Man in the Moon went on, "when I don't appear in the sky, it's only because I've turned my back."

"And what are you doing then?" asked Bob.

"Ah," said the Man in the Moon, "that's when I'm having my fun. You see, when I'm on view, I have to behave myself and just stay in my place quietly and beam brightly. But when I'm turned around, and people can't see me, I'm having a merry time, I can assure you. I'm up to mischief, I confess. I tweak the comets' tails as they fly by, and I worry the dog-star until he nearly flies into a fit."

"Is the dog-star really a dog?" exclaimed Betty. "What kind is he?"

THE MAN IN THE MOON

"Oh, no," cried Betty, "I don't want to go up in the sky to stay. At least, not yet. I want to go through the Maze and find Queen Dick's palace."

"Oh, well, have your own way," said the Man in the Moon, indulgently; "children always know what they want, and I like to help them get it if I can. Here, I'll light up old Jack o' Lantern for you, and then I must be going."

The Man in the Moon woke Jack o' Lantern with a shake, lighted his candle, and then with a whirl and a twirl he was gone.

"If you're a bear, growl," he said at parting, and the children saw him flying through the air, high above their heads, and in a few moments he was out of sight.

THE DREAM-MILL

of the time. But he always came prancing back to finish his sentence, so now he whirled toward the children, again saying, "Because I like to go around with the Knight of the Night. He keeps me in order."

"As if any one could keep *you* in order," said the Knight of the Night, laughing, as he gave Will o' the Wisp a good-natured shake.

"Hello, Jack, come on!" cried the irrepressible fellow, dancing up to his heavy-headed comrade.

"Come on where?" muttered Jack o' Lantern, still half asleep. "Oh, there's the Knight of the Night. Did you call me, sir?"

"Yes," said the Knight. "I am taking two of my friends through the Maze, and I wish you and Will o' the Wisp to light our steps for us."

"That we will!" cried Jack o' Lantern, heartily, jumping up and giving Will o' the Wisp a playful cuff. "Come along, Will, we're to light the party."

But Will o' the Wisp had already danced ahead, so the Knight of the Night followed, holding Bob and Betty by the hand.

THE DREAM-MILL

and tranquilly beneath. On either side the river were high banks, green with waving grasses and bright with gay flowers. To watch the flowing water made Betty feel queer and almost drowsy, and she grasped the bridge-rail as she looked up at the Knight, and said, "What river is this?"

"This is the River Trance," he replied. "The Dream-Makers up at the mill send great cargoes down this river. See, here comes a ship now."

Sure enough, floating toward them came a great ship. It looked misty and unreal, but it seemed to be filled with beautiful things of lovely shapes and bright, soft colors; and from its masthead floated a silken pennant bearing in gold letters the words "Ship of Dreams."

The bridge was very high, and the great ship glided easily beneath it, while, with breathless interest, the children watched it reappear on the other side.

"Oh," exclaimed Betty, "it's full of dreams, isn't it? Come on, let's go to the mill and see where they make them."

THE DREAM-MILL

Weaver. "I'll take your order," and he reached down a big order-book.

"May I order some dreams, too?" said Betty.

"Yes, indeed," said the Dream-Weaver; "just tell me your address, and I'll send you whatever sort of dreams you want for the rest of your life."

"Lovely!" cried Betty. "I want dreams of fairies and flowers and big wax dolls and candy and sand on the seashore."

"That's all right," said the Dream-Weaver, making notes in his big book; "and now, just for fun, would you like to pick out a dream to send to some little friend of yours?"

"Oh, I guess I would. Why, if I could only send Teenty Goodell a dream about her kitten, she'd be *so* glad!"

"Tell me about it, and I'll weave it for you," said the Dream-Weaver.

"Well, you see," began Betty, "she had the loveliest kitten, all white, only blue eyes and a blue ribbon around its neck. And a big dog shook it, and it died; only it was a lovely dog,

THE DREAM-MILL

Bob. "Then I s'pose they wrap up these dreams in bales and ship them."

"Yes," said the Knight of the Night; "and, Betty, here comes your kitten dream."

Betty watched breathlessly as the Dream-Fairies unrolled a web of dream-stuff, and she saw the white dream-kitten. The Dream-Fairies silently cut out the dream, and, packing it carefully, marked it for Miss Teenty Goodell, and laid it among the dreams ready to be shipped.

"Why don't they speak?" whispered Betty to the Knight of the Night.

"Dream-Fairies never do," he replied. "They just make dreams all the year round, except on Midsummer's eve, when, of course, they have holiday."

"What becomes of all the scraps?" asked Bob, looking at the piles and heaps of remnants left from cutting out the dream-pictures.

"Oh, they're all used to make nightmares and broken dreams," said the Knight.

"The Dream-Fairies never talk," said Will o' the Wisp, as he disappeared through a win-

THE DREAM-MILL

This song, sung in the Dream-Fairies' soft, sweet voices, was so drowsy and dreamy that Bob and Betty found themselves nodding. But as the song stopped, they roused themselves suddenly, very wide awake, only to find that the Knight of the Night, Jack o' Lantern, and Will o' the Wisp had all disappeared.

"Where are they?" asked Betty of the Dream-Fairies, but those industrious workers only bent closer over their work and sung, in a low, crooning voice, "Dreams, dreams, dreams."

"Come on, Betty," said Bob; "I can find my way 'round this Maze, and likely we'll meet Will o' the Wisp soon, anyway. Good-by, Dream-Fairies."

"Good-by, Dream-Fairies," repeated Betty, and, taking Bob's hand, she trotted along out of the Dream-Mill into the winding paths of the Great Maze.

THE APRIL FOOL

"This is a funny garden!" exclaimed Betty.
"I'm quite sure I heard those roses bark."

To be sure, the two big rose-bushes which stood on either side of the gate were barking, and as Bob and Betty looked at them and listened they heard short, sharp, distinct barks, as of a number of dogs.

"Why shouldn't they bark?" said a voice behind them, and Bob and Betty turned quickly to see a strange young man looking at them.

"Why shouldn't they bark?" he repeated.
"They're dog-roses, my watch-dog-roses. And I keep them there by the gate to warn me of the approach of intruders."

"We don't mean to be intruders," said Bob, taking Betty's hand and facing the stranger squarely. "We thought we might go wherever we choose in the Maze."

"So you can," said the strange young man, "so you can," and he giggled in a most foolish way.

"You don't know me," he went on, "you don't know me! I can see you don't. And yet you've heard of me. Often and often."

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"Then tell us who you are, please," said Betty, "for I don't recognize you."

"You don't, eh, little miss? Well, I'm the April Fool." And with a burst of laughter he turned a double somersault and stood grinning at them.

After hearing his name, Bob and Betty felt that they knew him at once.

The April Fool was a most picturesque-looking creature, and very good-humored and jolly. He was dressed in a motley suit of green and white, with gilt bells jingling from every point of his doublet. He wore a peaked cap of green and white, and on that, too, gilt bells jingled. In his hand he held a bauble, which, as you know, is a kind of doll's head on a stick. This bauble, too, wore a green and white blouse and cap with gilt bells tinkling as the gay April Fool danced about.

"I'm glad to see you," he cried, capering madly up and down; "I'm right down glad to see you. I haven't seen any children in I don't know when."

"Why not?" asked Bob; "surely, children

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come to the Land of Nod as often as grown people."

"Yes," said the April Fool, thoughtfully; "yes, they do. Well, I can't explain that, so we'll drop the subject. Who are you?"

"We're Bob and Betty," said the boy, "and we want to travel through the Maze. Can you help us?"

"Yes," said the April Fool, "if you'll wait till I come back. I'm going down to the brook for worms."

"What kind of worms?" asked Bob, who was interested in such things.

"Angleworms," replied the April Fool. "I suppose you know why they're so called?"

"I don't," said Betty, who was always ready to confess her ignorance; "why are they?"

"Because they have no angles," said the April Fool. "Now, isn't that a foolish reason? That's why I understand it so well," he added, with a sigh. "It would be just like me to name a soft curving worm 'angleworm,' but I don't know why people who are not fools would do so. Do you?"

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"No," said Bob, thoughtfully, "I don't. And I never realized before what an absurd name it is. But I don't think you're a fool. You seem very reasonable."

"Oh, yes, little sir. I'm a fool, sure enough. I'm the real original April Fool, court jester to the Queen of May. If you take the right path in the Maze, you'll come to the May-pole, and you'll find us there. But now I must go; I have got to get the worms, for I'm going fishing with Simple Simon. He's my great chum, and I'm always with him when I'm not on duty at court. Good-by; I'll sing myself away."

So saying, the April Fool began to back away from the children, singing as he receded:

"Oh, I'm the April Fool,
I've never been to school;
I dance and play,
The livelong day
Unheeding law or rule.

"I've not sufficient brains
To go in when it rains;
And so for hours,
In April showers
I wander in the lanes."

THE APRIL FOOL

After he sang this the April Fool stood looking at the children, and so ridiculous did he appear that they burst out laughing, and in a moment he was lost from sight.

"It's so provoking," said Betty, "the way people disappear. I quite like that April Fool, and I'd be glad to see more of him."

"You would, would you?" he exclaimed, and there was the April Fool back again. "I'm sorry, but I can't stay. It's Queen Dick's law. You know, the whole Land of Nod is under the reign of Queen Dick."

"Queen Dick!" exclaimed both children together; "who is she?"

"Oh, she's just Queen Dick, that's all. I've never seen her myself, but I've heard of her all my life, and she lives in a beautiful palace, right in the center of the Maze."

"But what is the Maze?"

"Why, it's just a great big garden, filled full of winding paths that cross and recross each other until they are all tangled up."

"I should think people would always get lost in it," said Betty.

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"Of course they do," said the April Fool.
"That's what it's for. Everybody gets lost in it. They enjoy it, you know. Why, there's nothing that's more fun than being lost in Queen Dick's Maze."

"But, do the travelers never reach Queen Dick's palace?" asked Betty.

"No. They always get lost in the Maze while trying to find the palace. You see, the paths are so crooked, and so many of them, it's impossible to know where they lead."

"But one *does* lead to the palace?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes; or rather a series of paths lead to the palace. If you follow a certain route you'll get there. But no one has ever found the route."

"I shall," said Bob, with determination expressed in every line of his fat little face.
"Betty and I will find the way and reach the palace."

"Oh, ho!" laughed the April Fool; "you're a brave youngster, you are. But I scarcely think you will be able to make good your boast."

THE APRIL FOOL

You've no idea how confusing it all is. Why, you start out and travel for miles, and, very like, find you have come back to where you started."

"Never mind," said Bob, confidently, "we shall succeed, I'm sure."

"Yes," said Betty, "we most always *do* succeed, if we're *very* much in earnest. But can't you help us?"

"Oh, yes," said the April Fool, "I can help you. I can give you rules. Fool rules, to be sure; but it's a good thing to be sure, you know."

"Yes, sir," said Betty.

"First," went on the April Fool, "whichever way you're going, go the other."

"Why?" asked practical Bob.

"Because," said the April Fool, "you're sure to be going wrong; so if you change, you're more likely to be going right."

"But what is right?"

"Right to Queen Dick's palace. Ah, if you ever reach that, you'll be glad you started. It's wonderful, wonderful!"

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"But you've never seen it."

"No; but I know it's wonderful. Everything's wonderful in here. I'm wonderful."

"You're only a fool."

"Yes, I know; but I'm a wonderful fool. You see, I'm not an ordinary court fool. Far from it. I am a court fool, to be sure, but I'm jest a jester to the Queen o' May, and she's far from ordinary. Oh, my!"

The April Fool rolled his eyes, and expressed such ecstatic admiration that Betty said, "Who is the Queen o' May? And where is she?"

"May follows April," said the April Fool, with an air of great wisdom, and he began to run.

"Come back!" called Bob; "we want to talk to you, but we don't want to run after you."

The April Fool returned, amicably enough, and seating himself on a fallen log, began to swing his feet and whistle.

"Where is your Queen o' May?" repeated Bob, who had decided that sternness was better than coaxing with the April Fool.

THE APRIL FOOL

"Queen of May
Did you say?"

sang the April Fool, provokingly.

"Yes, I did," said Bob, decidedly, "and I want an answer."

"You ask me
Who is she?"

continued the April Fool, in a silly sing-song voice.

"I do," said Bob.

"Ho, ho, ho,
To the Maypole go,
And you'll find out what you want to know,"

sang the April Fool, and with a dozen somersaults, one after another, he was out of sight.

"Come back," called Bob, and Betty, too, but nobody came.

"Well, then," said Bob, with his usual determined air, "we go to the May-pole. Come along, Betty."

Not averse to walking on the lovely flower-paths, Betty took her brother's hand and they started.

"Oh, here's an aquarium!" cried Bob, before they left the April Fool's garden.

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"What queer fish!" said Betty; "they're red flowers!"

"Of course they are," said the April Fool, who suddenly appeared again; "they're fish geraniums. Aren't they lovely?"

"Yes, indeed," said Betty; "I never saw anything like them."

"Never saw fish geraniums?" exclaimed the April Fool.

"Oh, yes," said Betty, "of course I've seen those, but I never saw them kept in a glass tub."

"That's because people are so stupid," said the April Fool. "I may be a fool, but I know enough to keep my fish geraniums in water. Sensible people give them a dash of water every day, and think that is enough. Poor things, no wonder they die!"

"Show us some of your other flowers," said Bob, much interested in this strange garden.

"Oh, I haven't many," said the April Fool, shyly. "I've a few tiger-lilies and dandelions in cages. Here they are. They're wild flowers, you know, and I'm awfully afraid they'll get out some night. But the bars are

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strong. Here I'm trying an experiment. I'm grafting cattails on to pussy-willows. I think it will be a success, and they'll look like real Angoras. But of course I don't know. I'm such a fool."

"I wish you'd show us the way to the Maypole," said Bob.

"I would gladly," said the April Fool, "but I don't know it. I did know it—in fact, I've known it many times, but I'm such a fool I forget. But let's all start out together, and perhaps it will come to me."

Taking each twin by the hand, the April Fool set off at a brisk trot, and Bob and Betty danced along in glee.

CHAPTER VII

THE MAY-POLE

THE April Fool strode along, and Bob and Betty romped merrily beside him. As they came to the forks in the road which had been so puzzling before, the April Fool seemed to know instinctively which way to take, and he took it.

"What's that?" said Bob.

"What's what?" asked the April Fool.

"That!" said Bob.

"What?" said the April Fool.

"Why, *that!*" said Bob.

"Why, *what?*" said the April Fool.

"*That!*" said Betty.

"I don't know," said the April Fool.

"Well, then, let's begin all over again," said Betty.

"All right," said the April Fool, cheerfully.

"What's what?"

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"That big-sticking-up-stone-thing over there on the grass," said Bob.

"Oh, that," said the April Fool, "that's a night watch."

"What's a night watch?" asked Betty.

"Why, you know," said the April Fool, "it's like a sun-dial, only it doesn't have to work daytimes."

"Doesn't it have to work Sundays?" asked Bob.

"Of course not," said Betty. "Nobody works on Sunday."

"But it works Sunday nights," said the April Fool, doubtfully.

"But it oughtn't to," said Betty, decidedly.

"What day is to-night?" asked Bob.

"Yesterday was Saturday," suggested the April Fool, tentatively.

"Then to-morrow will be Monday," said Betty, who was quick at figures.

Bob thought for a moment, and made a rush for the queer-looking stone. "Then it must be working now!" he cried. "It's Sunday night."

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

And sure enough it was.

"What time does it say it is?" asked Betty, as the three stood gazing into the big white open face of the night watch.

"I don't know," said the April Fool; "I can't tell time."

"Neither can I," said Betty.

"Nor I," said Bob.

"It must be late," said the April Fool, "because it can't be anything else on a night watch."

"Then, if it's as late as that," said Betty, "it's time we went away."

"Come on, then," said the April Fool.

But as they started Betty gave a little squeal of joy. "Oh, here comes the Knight of the Night!" she cried. And she flew to meet her old friend.

The Knight of the Night stooped and lifted Betty to his shoulder. "Where have you been all this time?" he asked.

"Seeing things," said Betty; "just seeing things."

"Wonderful things," said Bob. "You just

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ought to have seen the April Fool's garden."

"You see—" began the April Fool; but Betty interrupted him with a shrill scream.

"Ow!" she cried. "Where did that dog come from?"

"He came with me," said the Knight of the Night; "I'm going to take him over to the night watch."

"Oh, is he a watch-dog?" asked Bob.

"Well, yes," said the Knight of the Night; "that is, he's a setter."

"Oh, may I see him set the night watch?" asked Betty.

"Certainly," said the Knight of the Night, leading the way.

After the night watch was properly set the Knight of the Night turned the setter around, and started him for home.

"That's a fine watch-dog you have," said Bob.

"Oh, he isn't a watch-dog now," said the April Fool. "When he's turned around he's a dog watch."

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"My, but it's late," said the Knight of the Night, looking at the night watch. "It's time you were back at the court, Fool!"

"Come on," said the April Fool." And on they went, Betty still on the Knight's shoulder and Bob and the April Fool with the watch-dog following.

"Who knows the way to the May-pole?" said Betty.

"I do," said the Knight of the Night, "but I won't tell."

"I used to know," said the April Fool, "but I haven't been there for an hour and a half, so of course I have forgotten. I am *such* a fool!"

The watch-dog did not say anything.

"Then I don't see how we can get there," said Betty. "But I don't care as long as we are with you." And she patted the Knight of the Night on his black helmet.

"Well," said the Knight of the Night, "the April Fool is taking us there, so he must show us the way."

The April Fool looked especially stupid.

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"It is easy enough," he said. "We have only to follow the May-pole-star. That is it—that big bright yellow one that shines so twinkly up there."

Once started in the right direction, they soon came to a large enclosure, in which, the April Fool informed them, was the May-pole. The entrance was a trellis gate of flowers, which swung open as they approached. Over the gate in shining letters were the words, "The Land of Gayhearts."

"That sounds lovely," said Betty; "I like people to be gay."

"They are gay enough in here," said the April Fool.

And sure enough, it seemed so.

It was a great bowery garden, in the center of which stood a gilded May-pole. Bright ribbon streamers floated from the top, whose ends were held by dancing fairies. But almost before the twins looked at these they saw two big white polar bears come dancing toward them, and Betty clung to her good friend the Knight, uncertain whether to be afraid or not.

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"How do you do?" said the bears, bowing low. "May we escort you to the Queen o' May?"

"Are you polar bears?" asked Bob.

"Well, yes," was the reply; "that is, we are May-polar bears. Now, come with us to the Queen."

"Go," said the Knight of the Night, setting Betty down from his shoulder and straightening her sash.

The May-polar bears took Bob and Betty by the hand and conducted them to the Queen's throne.

The throne was made of soft green moss with a canopy of flowers tied with garlands of ribbon, and the Queen herself was the fairest, prettiest, sweetest little lady in the world.

She smiled at the children, and said: "You are welcome to my court. Have you gay hearts?"

"Yes, indeed," said Betty; "it's enough to make anybody gay to see all these flowers, and fairies, and things."

"I always have a gay heart," said Bob,

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stoutly. "What's the use of having any other kind?"

"No use at all," said the Queen o' May. "And now will you join the May-pole dance, or will you sit here by me and watch it?"

"I'd rather sit by you," said Betty, cuddling into the great chair beside the Queen o' May.

"So would I," said Bob, seating himself at her feet on the top step of the throne.

"Very well," said the Queen o' May, and then she waved her hands and cried, "Let the dance begin!"

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE LAND OF GAYHEARTS

THE dance was a merry show. The two May-polar bears grasped ends of fluttering ribbon. The April Fool clutched wildly at two ribbons, and to Betty's great surprise the solemn and dignified Knight of the Night found a black ribbon which just matched his armor.

With a whirl and a twist, Will o' the Wisp appeared, and he too took a ribbon. After seeing this, the twins were not surprised to see Jack o' Lantern come ambling in and slowly pick up a ribbon-end.

Blithe music began to play, and the dancers spun round the May-pole, weaving the bright ribbons in and out, and as they danced they all sang this song:

" In the merry month of May
Life is bright and hearts are gay.
Join the ring
While we sing
A merry roundelay.

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“Sing a chorus to the Queen,
Fairest lady ever seen.
Laugh, ha, ha,
And sing tra, la,
Dancing on the green.”

After the song was finished the April Fool, with three somersaults, came bounding up to the Queen o' May.

“Oh, Queen, live forever,” he said, as he made a low bow. “Oh, Queen, there is somebody coming.”

“Is't so?” said the Queen, without showing much interest.

“Aye, 'tis so indeed,” said the April Fool. “And, moreover, 'tis a personage of great importance. None less than the Tippity-Witch and her Tribe of Tricksy Trolls.”

The Queen o' May turned into a queen of dismay.

“I wish she hadn't come,” she said. “But since she is here, I suppose we must entertain her. Bid her enter.”

“Yes, your Majesty,” said the April Fool. And he ordered the May-polar bears to admit the visitor.

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Bob and Betty screamed with glee when they saw the new arrival.

The Tippity-Witch was a most absurd-looking affair. Tall and angular, with a costume made entirely of fluttering ribbon-ends and a high red peaked hat. Her sharp-featured face was full of fun, but her smile looked as if it worked by machinery.

Behind her trotted a dozen or more funny little fairies, wearing funny little costumes made of red feathers.

"The Tippity-Witch is here," remarked that personage herself, as she approached the Queen.

Her way of approach was most peculiar. She hippity-hopped in a springy way, first on one foot and then on the other.

When she spied Bob and Betty she darted at them and clutched each by an arm.

"The Tippity-Witch greets you," she said, grinning gaily.

"There, there," said the Knight of the Night; "don't scare those children into fits.

"The Tippity-Witch does as she pleases,"

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was the retort, and dancing Bob and Betty up and down, as she still held them by their little arms, she continued: "The Tippity-Witch loves children, and she will take you away to live with her in her far-off mountain home."

"Not much you won't," said Will o' the Wisp, twirling himself into the conversation. "These twins were left in my charge by the Sandman, and I am responsible for them."

"And I," said the Knight of the Night, looking very tall and black, as he glared at the Tippity-Witch.

"Me, too," said Jack o' Lantern, shaking his heavy head, until his candle flame flickered.

"O-ho," cried the April Fool, dancing about, "what nonsense you all talk! Bob and Betty are my especial charges, and me and the Queen o' May can look after them, so the rest of you may clear out as soon as you like."

Without making reply, the Tippity-Witch began to prance up and down in a sort of a swinging dance, while her Tribe of Trickxy Trolls capered behind her.

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

Unheeding the company, she began to croon,
as if to herself:

"As the Tippity-Witch climbed over the Moon
And sat on the edge of the year,
She remarked in surprise to her pet white loon,
'Why, the month of May is here.
And of course that means we must catch some grigs
And dress them in sky-pink silk,
And make them all wear flaxible wigs,
And feed them on muffins and milk.'

"And then said the Tippity-Witch, said she.
With an audible laudable smile,
'Twould be utterly useless, of course, you see,
To swim the frozen Nile.
But still if you think the piebald horse
Is as red as the noonday sky,
Then the lavender bumblebee, of course,
Is most exceedingly spry."

With one accord the Tribe of Tricksy Trolls
began to stamp their feet and groan.

"She's off again," said one of them. "I
feared as much."

"Take her away," said the Queen o' May.
"I don't like her when she gets these crazy
spells."

"I do," said Bob. "I think it's funny to
hear her talk. And to see her," he added, for

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the Tippity-Witch was performing marvelous antics, in which her Tribe of Tricksy Trolls joined.

"So do I," said Betty. "Please, let them stay a while."

"Oh, I don't care," said the Queen o' May, "if she amuses you."

"The Tippity-Witch can do many things," said the Witch herself, in a low, monotonous tone, "many and many and many."

"What kind of things?" demanded Bob.

"Give the Tippity-Witch a broomstick and she will show you," was her answer.

"Here's one," said the April Fool, offering her a long broom made of twigs.

"Aha," said the crazy creature, "the Tippity-Witch rideth away, and rideth afar."

She perched herself on the broomstick, and rising slowly, soared through the air, while her Tribe of Tricksy Trolls flew after her.

"Are they gone?" said Betty, looking greatly disappointed.

"Yes," said the Queen o' May; "but they'll return, perhaps."

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"Not if I can help it," said the April Fool. "I don't like the old lady, and never did. Come on, let's play games."

"Oh, yes," said the Queen o' May, jumping up and apparently forgetting the dignity of her position. "What shall we play?"

"I don't know any nice games," said the April Fool; "I'm such a fool."

"Then we can't play any," said the Queen o' May, decidedly. "Oh, here are two of those Trolls back again!"

"What do you want, little chaps?" said the Knight of the Night, kindly, for he saw that the Queen o' May was not inclined to welcome these guests very cordially.

"We came back to see Bob and Betty," said the Trolls, speaking together, each with a finger in his mouth and looking very shy.

"And we're glad to see you," said Bob. "What are your names?"

"His is Flibbertigibbet," said one, pointing his finger at the other.

"And his is Pigwidgeon," said the other, pointing his finger at the one.

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"Those are lovely names," said Betty, "but just a little hard to learn at first. Couldn't I call you something else for short?"

"No," said Flibbertigibbet, decidedly, "the Tippity-Witch objects to nicknames, and we are not allowed. But you can learn them if you try. Do you want to see us do our tricks?"

"Indeed, we do," cried both children together.

And then the Tricksy Trolls began a series of wonderful performances. They swarmed up the May-pole and stood on their heads on its gilded ball and then slid down the ribbons.

They called the May-polar bears to them, and pretending they were circus horses, jumped on their backs and rode madly around the May-pole.

As the May-polar bears were old and big and very fat, they didn't fancy this performance much, but the Tricksy Trolls cared nothing for that. They pranced up and down on the backs of the great creatures, and urged them on by alternate kicking and pounding.

"Now there'll be a race," said Flibbertigibbet. "Are you ready, Pigwidgeon?"

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"Yes," cried the other. "Hoop-la! We're off."

Side by side the big bears ambled up to the Queen o' May, reaching her about the same moment.

"The race is won," said the April Fool.

"Which won?" asked the Queen o' May.

"Which one?" repeated the April Fool. "I don't know, I'm sure. I can't tell one from t'other."

"Oh, well, never mind," said the Queen o' May; "let's have the picnic."

So they all sat down on the grass, and the Queen o' May's lackeys brought them lemonade and little pink cakes.

The Knight of the Night couldn't sit down on the ground on account of his armor, so he stood up, and as for the two Tricksy Trolls, they just danced about.

So did Will o' the Wisp. He would fly out of sight with one cake, but always reappeared in time to get another.

Jack o' Lantern, of course, fell asleep with a half-eaten cake in his hand.

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Finally another dish was passed around, but what its contents were Bob and Betty couldn't quite make out. They were red sweetmeats, and looked like flower petals, but tasted like sugar-plums.

"Are they candied poppy-leaves?" asked Betty.

"Yes," said the Queen o' May, "but we call them lollipoppies."

"They are very nice," said Betty, blinking her eyes; "but somehow they make me feel drowsy."

"They make me right down sleepy," said Bob, covering a big yawn with his little fat hand.

"No wonder," said the Knight of the Night. "Look at the rest of them."

And sure enough, each one of the party had either fallen asleep or was looking very dreamy and drowsy.

"If you children eat another lollipoppy you will be sound asleep in a minute. And then what shall I do with you?"

"What, indeed!" cried Will o' the Wisp,

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appearing suddenly. "But I say, Knight, let's go on through the Maze."

"All right," said the Knight of the Night. And picking up Bob and Betty, he carried them, one in either arm, for they were really too sleepy to walk straight.

Will o' the Wisp darted ahead, and the Knight of the Night softly followed out through the gate from the Land of Gayhearts.

CHAPTER IX

ROBIN GOODFELLOW

WITH the two children still sleeping in his arms, the Knight of the Night walked along the paths of the Maze. The watch-dog followed him and Jack o' Lantern plodded along by his side. Will o' the Wisp danced ahead, now in sight, and now out; now talking, and now keeping still.

"We're almost there," he said, suddenly appearing at the Knight's elbow. "Why don't you awaken them?"

"Hush," said the Knight of the Night, "they're waking themselves."

Bob and Betty opened their eyes and faintly heard a drowsy musical drone that nearly sent them off to sleep again.

"What is it?" asked Betty, whispering in the Knight's ear.

"Listen," he said. And listening, the twins

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heard a browsing buzz as of a million grasshoppers and locusts.

"Where are we?" asked Bob, rubbing his eyes.

"Here's a chap that will tell you," said the Knight of the Night as he set the children down on the ground.

"Aye, that will I," said a funny, squeaky voice, and before them stood the most mischievous-looking fairy they had ever seen.

"This," said Will o' the Wisp, suddenly appearing, "is Robin Goodfellow. Beware of his tricks."

"Do thou beware, thou candlestick, thou lightning-rod, thou electric-light pole!" said Robin Goodfellow. And catching Will o' the Wisp by one of his long, pointed toes, he tossed him up in the air.

"Go up among the stars, where thou belongest, thou lightlet, and stay there, we'll have none of thee. Ho, Jack o' Lantern! thou art all too flaming a sun."

And then with a piff-puff he blew out Jack o' Lantern's candle.

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“Fie, fie, Robin Goodfellow!” said the Knight of the Night; “you’re naught but a bunch of tricks.”

“Of a truth ’tis so.” And climbing up the Knight’s armor, as up a ladder, Robin Goodfellow perched on the black helmet and began to sing:

“I’m a tricksy sprite,
A wicked wight,
And the fun I love the best,
Is to tease my friends,
Till their patience ends,
And they vow I am a pest.

“I play rare jokes
On stupid folks,
And then I shriek in glee
To see them scowl,
And hear them growl,
As angry as can be.”

“Come down, Imp of Foolishness,” said the Knight. And catching Robin by his pointed wings he lifted him down.

“Merry Bob and pretty Betty,” said the imp, “I wish ye well. Come with me. I am but a tricksy sprite, but I can show ye fair scenes and fond fun.”

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"May we go?" whispered Betty, sidling up to the Knight.

"Yes, let us go," said Bob; "I like him first rate."

"Go, then," said the Knight. "But do you know where he is taking you?"

"Where?" asked both twins at once.

"Where?" repeated Robin Goodfellow. "Forsooth, to the ducking-stool; 'tis a fit place for naughty children."

"But we're not naughty children," said Betty.

"He doesn't mean it," said Bob, who caught the twinkle in the fairy's eye. "But I won't go with him unless he tells where he is going to take us."

"O-ho, young sir, thou art a mighty one. Well, know then that I take thee to the Midsummer Night's Dream, the fairest spot in all the Land of Nod, the pride of Queen Dick and the glory of her reign."

"I'll go there," said Betty; "I always wanted to see the Midsummer Night's Dream."

"Follow me, then," said Robin Goodfellow.

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"But it's so dark," said Bob.

"Nay," said Robin Goodfellow, "for I will hold my firefly aloft."

Waving high his tiny hand, in which, between finger and thumb, he held a firefly by one wing, the imp dashed ahead with skips a yard long.

Bob took Betty's hand, and together they ran after their guide.

But what a run it was! Far different from the pleasant walks with the Knight or the merry romping with the April Fool.

Instead of choosing smooth, flowery paths, Robin Goodfellow seemed to select the roughest, hardest roads; now through a bed of briars he led them, and now through a stony field.

But Bob and Betty were plucky ones, and they trotted after him as fast as their fat little legs would allow.

Robin turned, and seemed surprised that the twins followed him so closely.

"Haven't you fallen down once?" he cried, in astonishment.

"No," said Bob. "Why should we?"

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"But it's an awful hard road," said little Betty.

Then Robin Goodfellow laughed wildly, and shrieking with glee, he exclaimed: "Come on! through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier." And waving his firefly, he ran on.

Just as Bob and Betty thought they couldn't possibly go any farther Robin Goodfellow paused at the entrance to a thick grove.

The trees were tall and dark and very close together—so close, indeed, that Betty could see no opening at all.

"How do we get in?" she asked.

"Climb right over the trees," answered the sprite. "Can you do it?"

"Nonsense!" said Bob. "I'm going to crawl under."

"O-ho, thou foolish one," said Robin, "'tis but a step to the gate." And dancing ahead, while the children followed, he threw open a great green gate.

Robin Goodfellow dashed ahead and the twins followed.

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In the half gloom Bob and Betty could see that they had entered another beautiful fairy place, but it was so dark that they could distinguish very little.

"Have a care," cried Robin, "or you'll stumble over the Sleepers."

"I should think we would," retorted Bob. "Nobody can see anything in this dark place."

He held Betty tight by the hand, saying, "We're not going any farther unless we can see where we're going."

"Ho, ho!" cried the sprite. "What manner of child art thou? Hast thou no eyes in thy head? My brilliant firefly giveth light enough for all the legions of Midsummer fairies. 'Tis then a pretty to-do if it may not give light to small mortals."

"But it doesn't, all the same," said Bob.

"Here's one that will, then," cried a well-known voice. And with a whirl and a whisk, Will o' the Wisp stood before them.

"Oh, we're so glad to see you!" cried the twins, rushing at him so vigorously that they nearly upset his torch.

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"And I'm glad to see you again," responded Will o' the Wisp, heartily. "But what have we here?" And he kicked with his long pointed toes at something big and bulky on the ground.

"Kick all you like," said Robin Goodfellow; "you can't waken him. That's one of the Seven Sleepers."

Sure enough by the light of Will o' the Wisp's torch the twins could see seven queer old-looking men asleep on the ground. Near them sat a dog, who was by no means asleep, but watched keenly any who approached the Seven Sleepers, whose sleep he was guarding.

A slight movement on the part of one of the Sleepers attracted Will o' the Wisp's attention.

"Oh, we're just in time!" he cried. "They're going to turn!"

"Goody! Goody!" cried Robin. "So they are. You see," he added, speaking to the twins, "they turn once every hundred years. And *when* they turn great things happen."

"So they do," cried Will o' the Wisp, capering about. "Thunders and lightning——"

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"And comets and shooting stars," interrupted Robin Goodfellow.

"Yes, and winds," put in Will o' the Wisp;
"fearful big winds——"

"That put all the lights out," chuckled Robin.

"Are they going to turn now?" asked Betty, getting closer to Bob.

"Yes," shouted Robin, excitedly.

"Yes," screamed Will o' the Wisp. "Look out, there they go!"

With a long, slow stretch the Seven Sleepers turned simultaneously, all at once, and at the same time.

There was a fearful crash, peals of thunder, flashes of lightning, and fearful blasts of wind. Sounds of mighty rumbling and roaring mingled with banging explosions, and the terrified children clung closely to each other.

But in a moment all was calm again.

"It's all over," said Will o' the Wisp, pleasantly, as he relighted his torch, which the wind had blown out. "You didn't mind it much, did you?"

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"No," said Bob, stoutly; "that is, not very much."

"I did," said Betty, honestly; "I was scared out of my wits."

"Oh, you'll soon get used to it," said Robin Goodfellow, airily. "They turn every hundred years, you know."

Betty looked at the Seven Sleepers.

"I don't wonder they want to turn," she said. "They must get awfully cramped, sleeping so long."

"Well, of course, it rests them to turn," said Robin; "but it does make things hum. Hello! Here comes John-a-Dreams. Now we'll have some fun."

A long, lank fellow came ambling slowly along. He looked stupid and seemed only half awake. He wore a long white trailing garment, and carried a candle in a small brass candlestick.

"O-ho, John-a-Dreams," cried Robin Goodfellow, "have you come at last? Where in the world have you been?"

"Haven't been in the world," said the new-

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comer, yawning. "I've been up to see the Man in the Moon."

"Oh, have you?" cried Betty. "I wish you would take me there. I've always wanted to see the Man in the Moon."

"You'd get wet," said John-a-Dreams. "He lives in the sea, you know."

"Nonsense!" said Bob. "The Man in the Moon doesn't live in the sea."

"Yes, he does," replied John, earnestly. "If you look into the sea on a calm, still night, you can see him, just as e-easy."

"Oh, that's not the moon," cried Bob; "that's his reflection."

"No," said John-a-Dreams, leaning up against a tree and closing his eyes; "the one in the sky is the reflection, the one in the water is the real thing."

"Ridiculous!" said Will o' the Wisp. "Why, John-a-Dreams, you know you rode up there on a shooting star."

"It was a shooting starfish," replied John-a-Dreams, his eyes still closed.

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"And you carried a lamp," said Robin Goodfellow.

"It was a lamprey eel," said John. "But that was long ago. Nowadays I use an electric eel. Ever try one, ma'am?" he asked, turning to Betty and half opening his eyes.

"No," she replied, laughing. "Are they useful?"

"Fine, very fine. You see, you hold one by the tail, and he swims in any direction you want to go."

"And you wanted to go to the Man in the Moon," said Bob.

"Yes; and I went," said John-a-Dreams.

"Is the moon made of green cheese?" said Betty.

"Not green cheese, child; it's made of cream cheese."

"I guess you mean dream cheese," said Bob.

"No, young sir," said John-a-Dreams; "I mean cream cheese, made from the curds of the Milky Whey. It curdled in a thunder-storm once when the Seven Sleepers turned over."

"And does the Man in the Moon live in the

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cheese?" said Betty. "He must be just like a mouse."

"He isn't a bit like a mouse," said John-a-Dreams. "Not a bit, not a bit, not a bit——"

John-a-Dreams kept saying "Not a bit" over and over until he fell asleep and tumbled down into a little heap under the tree against which he had been leaning.

Robin Goodfellow, darting quickly from bush to bush, collected a few handfuls of sticky burs, which he disposed carefully on the ground either side of John-a-Dreams.

"There," he said, with an air of great satisfaction, "he's sure to roll into them whichever way he wakes up. Now, let's go on into the Midsummer Night's Dream."

"Is it part of the Maze?" asked Betty.

"Yes, everything is part of the Maze," replied Will o' the Wisp. "The paths lead to the places you know, and from those places you go into the other paths."

This was satisfactory, and so, following the two sprites with their flickering lights, Bob and Betty trotted on.

CHAPTER X

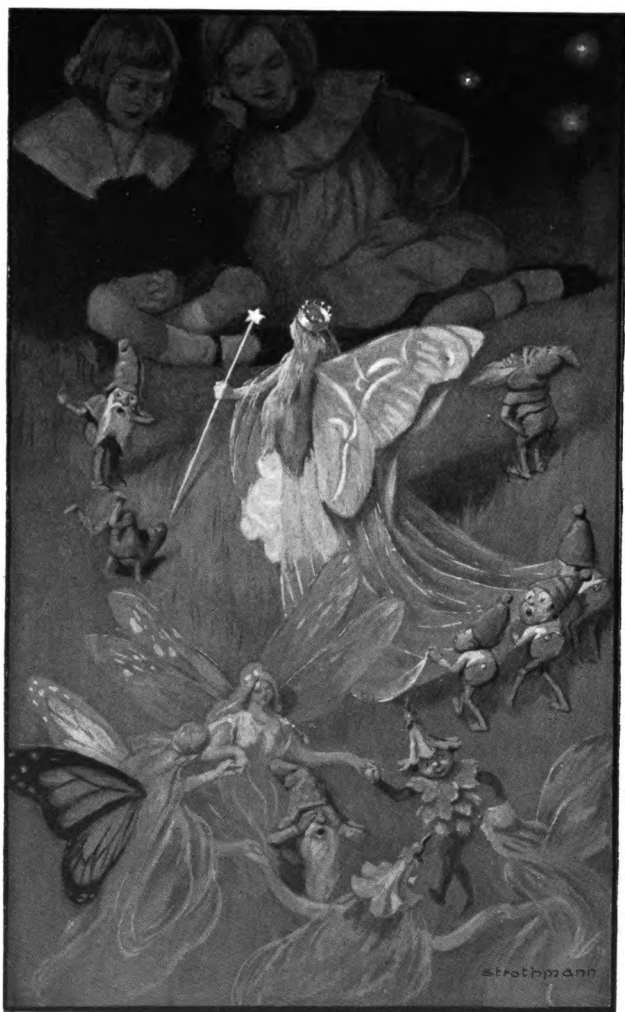
THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

THE Midsummer Night's Dream was nothing more nor less than a fairy wood. It was lighted by glowworms, which hung from the branches of the trees, and fireflies, which darted about everywhere. On the ground were fairy rings, where, as Will o' the Wisp explained, the fairies danced in the moonlight. Sounds were heard as of fairy music, and the bluebells and harebells, swaying in the breeze, gave out soft, tinkling sounds.

"Queen Mab is coming," cried Robin Good-fellow. And he flew over the ground to bow low before his approaching sovereign.

Breathless with delight, the twins watched the scene.

Queen Mab was a tiny fairy, dressed in white rose petals, with a gossamer veil made of a spider-web. She danced toward them, and



"I am Queen Mab," she said.

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her train of attendants followed closely behind her.

"I am Queen Mab," she said; "and you are very welcome to our Midsummer Night's Dream. These are my maids of honor," pointing to four exquisite creatures gowned in the petals of pink pond-lilies. "Their names are Hop, and Mop, and Trip, and Skip," she continued. And each maid of honor courtesied prettily as she was introduced. "Here, too, are my waiting-maids," went on Queen Mab; "their names are Fib, and Tib, and Pinck, and Pin."

The waiting-maids' gowns were made of the yellow daffodil, and the mingling of the bright colors and bright faces made what seemed to Betty the loveliest picture she had ever seen.

"These little chaps are my trusty courtiers," went on Queen Mab, smiling. "You see, I do not lack for attendants."

Four fairies with gossamer wings and merry, mischievous faces, flew up to be introduced as Peas-Blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-Seed.

Robin Goodfellow was dancing around

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among the whole crowd, pinching an ear here and tweaking a nose there, until Queen Mab fell to berating him for a good-for-naught.

"The wind is rising," said Queen Mab, looking anxiously at the waving branches of the trees.

"What harm, your Majesty?" said Robin Goodfellow. "The nut-shell ships are safely moored."

"Nay, 'tis not that," said Queen Mab. "I but bethought me of the babies in the tree tops."

"They're safe enough," said Peas-Blossom. "I tied them in with strands of strongest spider-web."

But even as he spoke a crashing sound was heard, and down from the top of a tall tree came tumbling a branch, to which was tied a cradle.

And in the cradle was a baby; and how the little thing did yell!

"Down comes Rock-a-by, cradle and all," screamed Robin Goodfellow, dancing excitedly around the crying infant. "Let me tweak its toes, let me pull its ears."

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"Nay, nay, thou Badling," said Queen Mab, waving him away. "The babe is daft with fright; give it to me."

Peas-Blossom and Cobweb gently carried the screaming baby to Queen Mab, while Moth and Mustard-Seed brought rose-leaf wraps to cover it.

Then Queen Mab crooned a lullaby:

"Rockaby, Baby, Fairies are near,
Fairies to love thee and comfort thee, dear.
Fairies to rock thee and sing thee to sleep
While the soft shadows of eventide creep.

"Rockaby, Baby, fair be thy dreams,
Swinging on high 'neath the moon's silver beams.
Hushaby, Baby, Fairies are here,
Nothing can harm thee while Fairies are near."

"Now the little one is asleep," said Queen Mab, softly. "Peas-Blossom, fly with her again to the top of the tree."

"Nay, let me take her," said Robin Goodfellow. And before any one could stop him he had grasped cradle, baby and all, and tossed

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them up to the top of a high tree, where they landed safely and swung gently in the breeze.

"Thou art a good fellow," said Queen Mab. And the merry sprite kissed her hand.

"And now to the revels," said Queen Mab.

She led the way, followed by her train of attendants, while Robin Goodfellow and Will o' the Wisp, with Bob and Betty between them, followed.

'Twas but a short way to the fairy ring, yet mischievous Robin found time to play his roguish tricks. He plaited Betty's hair with briars, he filled Bob's pockets with burs, he broke off a trumpet-flower and blew it shrilly in their ears, he tied cobwebs across the path to trip them up. But so merry and gay was he that the twins only laughed at his antics as they all ran on.

At the great fairy ring a multitude of fairies was assembled. There were the Elves, who, like Robin Goodfellow, were merry, harmless rogues full of pranks. There were the Goblins, funny little misty chaps, that you could see right through, or walk through, for

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that matter. There were the Nixies or water-fairies. Nixies, you know, have green teeth, and wear green hats, and are very beautiful. Then there were the Pixies, which are not anything like Nixies; they are Devonshire fairies, and quite different.

Then there were the Sylphs, which are really not fairies at all, but simply spirits of the air. So they don't count.

Then there were the Trolls. The Trolls are hill-fairies, and they are immensely rich. They have bags and bags of gold, which they keep in deep, dark caves.

But the Gnomes are richer still. You see, *they* are the fairies of the mines and forest. And they are monstrous rich, and most ferocious stuck-up.

Then there were the Wights. Now Wights are the dressiest fairies there are. They wear tall red caps, mantles of green cloth, inlaid with wild flowers, that button with bobs of silk; their shoes are of silver; and they always carry wands tipped with a golden star.

Then there are lots of other kinds of fairies:

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Brownies, of course, Kelpies, Kobolds, Peris—oh, lots of them, but all fairies.

The huddling, dancing crowd delighted Bob and Betty, and they sat down on the grass to see what would happen next.

First was the Bumblebee Race. A dozen fairies rode into the ring, each mounted on a fat, brown bumblebee. At a given signal they started and raced madly round the ring, helter-skelter, bumping into each other and tumbling about every way.

When they had all fallen off the umpire declared the race was over.

"That's a silly race," said Bob. "Fairies are pretty, Betty, but they have no sense."

"I think so, too," said Betty. "If they wanted to ride, why didn't they ride, and not just bump each other off?"

"Well, you see," said Robin Goodfellow, suddenly dancing up to them, "the bumblebees are blind."

"That's sillier yet," said Bob. "To race with blind bumblebees! Are there any more shows?"

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"Yes," said Robin, enthusiastically.

But Betty interrupted him by saying: "I don't want to see them if there are. I'm going to talk to Queen Mab."

Stepping very carefully to avoid treading on the little creatures, Betty picked her way to the throne of the Fairy Queen.

"I'm glad you've come," said Queen Mab; "I wanted to talk to you. You're a very nice little girl." And she climbed up on Betty's lap and patted her cheek. "Oh, a very nice little girl, so pretty, and good, and sweet, and kind, and loving, and generous."

"How do you know?" said Betty, laughing. "You scarcely know me at all."

"Oh, I can tell," said Queen Mab. "I'm a fairy, you know, and you *are* generous, aren't you? You just love to give away your things, don't you?"

"Not always," said Betty.

"Well, you ought to," said Queen Mab. "And if you don't give me what I want, I'll poke my fingers in your eyes, and I'll call Peas-Blossom to pull your ears, and Cobweb to pinch

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your toes, and Moth to untie your apron strings, and Mustard-Seed to tangle your curls—that's what I'll do."

"You'll do no such thing," said Betty, laughing; "for I'll hold you tight and won't let you go. But what is it that you want me to give you?"

"Ah, good Betty, kind Betty, sweet Betty," said Queen Mab, taking on a different tone, "you love me, don't you? And you want to please me, don't you?"

"I might," said Betty. "But what is it you want?"

"I want that little blue stone out of your ring," said Queen Mab, coaxingly. "It's such a little blue stone, such a pretty little blue stone, I want it for my crown jewel."

"Oh, I can't give you that," cried Betty. "My mamma gave me that ring for my birthday, and I must keep it forever'never."

Queen Mab gave a loud angry exclamation, and in a moment all her fairy court came rushing to her aid. They seemed fairly to swarm all over Betty. They teased her in every pos-

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sible way, and three or four of them together tried to draw the little ring from her finger. But she clenched her hand tightly so they could not get it off, and then some Gnomes came and with tiny pickaxes began to dig the little blue stone from its setting.

Bob, who had heard the commotion, came running to help his sister, but he was of small use, for there were so many fairies, and they swarmed all over him, too.

Robin Goodfellow danced about in delight. It was just such a scene as he liked best.

And though Will o' the Wisp wanted to help the twins, Robin wouldn't allow him to do so.

The mischievous fairies were not hurting Bob and Betty, but they tickled and teased them and cut up funny antics, until the twins were half laughing and half crying.

The Gnomes were working hard and Betty had sadly made up her mind that she must really lose her little blue stone, when Bob gave a shriek of delight, and looking up quickly, Betty saw the Knight of the Night approaching.

"Goodness, gracious me!" he exclaimed.

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“What is going on? Here, you rascally Pixies and Nixies, and Sprites and Wights, let these twins alone, and do it quickly. Be off, with you! Fly, skip, run, hop, tumble, jig away any way you can, but be off!”

Like magic the Knight's words dispelled the fairies, and with rumpled hair and flushed cheeks, Bob and Betty cuddled themselves into the arms of their good friend.

CHAPTER XI

THE RAGMAN

"DIDN'T you like the Midsummer Night's Dream?" said the Knight of the Night, as coming to a green grassy path, he set the children down and let them run by his side.

"Yes," said Betty. "I liked it all, except when I thought the fairies were going to steal my little blue ring. And anyway, they do tease awfully."

"Yes," said Bob. "Joking is all right, but pinchy-punchy teasing isn't fair. They gave us all pinches and no pats; teasing ought to be half and half."

"Which way are you people going?" said Will o' the Wisp, appearing in his usual sudden way.

"Up, across, and down again," said the Knight of the Night. "Where's Jack o' Lantern?"

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"Here I am," said a voice. And Jack o' Lantern came stumbling along, his green pumpkin-head wabbling, as it always did.

On they all went, the Knight of the Night knowing just which paths to take, and yet always choosing the prettiest ones.

Will o' the Wisp came back from one of his dancings ahead and said, mysteriously, "There's somebody around the next bend."

"Who is it?" asked the twins together.

"We'll soon find out," said the Knight of the Night, as they rounded the corner.

It proved to be a most ridiculous personage, and he stood peering at them from between the leaves of a tall poppy-plant.

"Come out and speak to us, sir," called the Knight of the Night. "Who are you?"

"I'm a Ragman," he replied, and his hearers had no difficulty in believing his statement.

His clothes hung in tatters, and he was wrapped in a most elaborate crazy quilt, while his long hair was tied up in bunches with fluttering rags.

"Yes," went on the absurd creature, "I'm

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only a Ragman, and so I suppose you won't care to associate with me."

"We will if you are good and kind," said Betty, promptly.

"Oh, I'm good enough, and I'm kind enough, but I have no manners," said the Ragman. "And yet," he went on, "how should I have any manners? I've never been in good society. I don't even know what good manners are."

"If you don't know what they are you can't be expected to have any," said Bob.

"What's that you're carrying in your arms?" asked Betty.

"That's my rag baby," said the Ragman. "I found it in a rag-bag, and it's such a comfort to me; she's a dear child, and as good as gold."

"Let me see her," said Betty, who thought she recognized an old friend.

And sure enough the rag baby was a worn-out old doll that Betty had discarded years before.

"Why, that's my old Dolly-Mopsey," she exclaimed. "Wherever did you get her?"

"I told you I found her in a rag-bag," said

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the Ragman, with a sudden accession of dignity. "And she's mine by right of possession."

"Oh, you may keep her," said Betty, laughing. "I don't want her. But she is a good old doll."

"Indeed, she is," said the Ragman. "And now I think I'll put her to sleep."

He sat down on the grass under the poppy-plant and began to sing a lullaby to the rag baby.

It was not like the fairy lullaby, and the twins couldn't help laughing to see the ragged old Ragman rocking back and forth, as he sang:

"Lullaby, Baby, go to your rest,
Even the hornet is seeking his nest.
See all the cabbages nodding their heads,
All the red strawberries sleep in their beds.
The little potatoes are closing their eyes,
The barley is cradled, and quietly lies,
So Lullaby, Rag Baby, go to sleep, do,
While the Ragman is singing in rag-time to you."

"That's a nice lullaby," said Betty, straightening her face, for she didn't want the Ragman to think she was laughing at him.

"Yes," said the Ragman, with a modest air,

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"I think it's quite nice. Though I made it myself, and, of course, I haven't any manners. But manners aren't necessary for a lullaby, are they?"

"No," said Betty. "Not 'zackly necessary, but if you truly want manners, I think my brother and I could teach you some."

"Have you any to spare?" asked the Ragman. But though Betty blushed a little, she felt sure he meant no offense, so she answered:

"Well, no, not to spare; but I think we can give you some, and not miss them."

"Oh, thank you," said the Ragman, gratefully; "I should be so glad to have them. You see, I've plenty of rag manners, but I suppose they aren't the real thing."

"I'm not sure but they are," said the Knight of the Night, who had been watching the Ragman. "But if you'll lay that rag baby down somewhere you may see what these children can do for you."

The Ragman selected a soft shaded spot and carefully laid the sleeping rag baby under the blossoms of the poppy-plant. Then stalking

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toward them in all his ragged dignity, he announced himself ready for his lesson.

"I don't know just what to do first," said Betty.

"Nor I," said Bob.

"This is an unusual class," said the Knight of the Night," and so it must be conducted in an unusual way. I think the best plan would be for the Ragman to ask questions and let Bob and Betty answer them."

"Very well," said the Ragman; "that will suit me. Now we'll begin. Teachers, attention! I have imagined that in good society one should give as much as he takes. Now, if you take a lady out to dinner, what do you give her?"

"You don't give her anything," said Bob, promptly. "No souvenir is required on such an occasion."

"Oh, I thought you gave her your arm," said the Ragman, meekly; "but, you see, I know so little of etiquette."

"You *do* give her your arm," said Betty, "but you don't give it to her to keep."

"No, of course not," said the Ragman, "for

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that would be *too* inconvenient. You'd be so very apt to need it again, you know. Of course, if you were going down-town, and had only an umbrella to carry, one arm would be plenty; but if you had a parcel as well, you'd want your other arm. Next question. Teachers, attention! Is it polite to drink the health of your host?"

"Certainly," said Bob, in his most positive way.

"What! and leave the poor man without any health? Leave him a helpless invalid for the rest of his natural life? Oh, I think that a most unkind return for favors received."

"But it doesn't mean that," said Betty, greatly disturbed.

"Doesn't mean what? It can't mean but one thing. If you drink his wine, his wine is gone; and if you drink his health, his health is gone, and there you are. Next question. Teachers, attention! Is it correct to come to the luncheon-table in your curl-papers?"

"No," declared Betty. "Nurse always takes mine out, even before breakfast."

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"Oh, you!" said the Ragman. "But suppose you are a lamb-chop, what then?"

"Your questions are absurd," said Bob. "We won't answer any more."

"Oh, yes, absurd, absurd. That's what everybody says when they don't know what else to say. Next question. Teachers, attention! *Is a person more respected if he appears at table well dressed?*"

Bob and Betty looked at the forlorn tattered figure before them, and hesitated. Then Betty said:

"I suppose it oughtn't to be so, but I can't help thinking you'd be more respected if you were well dressed."

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of myself," exclaimed the Ragman; "I meant, if you were a salad. Next question. Teachers, attention! *Is it correct to come to the breakfast-table in your wrapper?*"

"Do you mean for the lady of the house?" asked Bob, eying the Ragman severely.

"Oh, no; I meant if you were a newspaper," said the Ragman. "But I don't think you chil-

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dren know much about manners, anyway. I think it would really be better if I were teacher and you two were pupils."

"Well, I don't mind that," said Betty. "I think it would be fun."

"Very well, then, we'll begin. You needn't ask me questions, for I'm sure there isn't anything that you think you don't know. So, instead, I'll give you some rules to learn. First, as to table etiquette. If your parents are seated at the ends of the table, you should seat yourself at one side. Don't try to sit at both."

"Huh," said Bob, "that's a silly rule."

"All rules are silly to those who don't obey them," said the Ragman. "Now, here's another good one. If you're invited to drop into tea, always refuse; for it only makes your frock all wet, and spoils the tea, without doing any one any real good. Oh, my, the rag baby's awake!"

"I'm not sorry," said Betty to the Knight of the Night, "for now he'll stop teaching those silly rules."

"They weren't altogether silly," said Bob,

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"some of them were clever enough if any one needed them."

"That's always the way with rules," said Betty, thoughtfully; "the best ones are those we never have any use for. But here he comes with his rag baby."

The Ragman looked so happy and pleased as he caressed the rag baby that Betty began to like him again.

"Does the baby know much?" she said, with a polite interest.

"Alas, she knows nothing at all," said the Ragman, despondently.

"How old is she?" asked Bob.

"Oh, she's old enough," replied the Ragman. "She must be five or six years old, at least, though I think she looks more. Don't you?"

"I do, indeed," said Betty, noting the rag baby's extreme raggedness.

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said the Ragman. "I doubt if she ever sees the Queen, anyway."

"What queen?" asked Bob.

THE RAGMAN

“Why The Queen—Our Queen—Queen Dick, of course.”

“I haven’t seen her yet,” said Bob.

“Well, I don’t suppose you have ever *seen* her,” said the Ragman. “In fact, I never met any one that had really seen her; but she’s Queen of the Land of Nod, and a wonderful Queen she is, to be sure. She lives in her great palace, the Castle of Indolence. They say it’s the finest sight in the whole Land of Nod.”

“Can’t we go there?” asked Betty, looking up at the Knight of the Night in her coaxing way.

“We can go on,” said the Knight of the Night, “toward Queen Dick’s palace, and perhaps, sometime, somewhere——”

“Well, let’s go on, then,” said Bob, cheerfully. “And what do we come to next?”

“May I go, too,” interrupted the Ragman. “I’d love to go with you, though, of course, I have no manners, as you know.”

Betty went round to the other side of the Knight and slipped her little hand into his black

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gauntlet. She did not care to discuss manners any further.

“Come, if you can keep up,” said the Knight of the Night. And taking the twins’ hands, he walked briskly off.

CHAPTER XII

THE BAZOO

ON they went in the usual order, Will o' the Wisp dancing ahead, Jack o' Lantern lagging behind, and this time the Ragman and his rag baby tagged after them.

"Where are we going?" said Betty, as she skipped along by the Knight of the Night.

"We are going," he said, "to the So Illogical Gardens."

"What are they?" said Bob.

"Who cares what they are?" said Betty.

"We'll find out when we get there."

"Of course you will," said the Knight, "and in less than a jiffy."

They came to a large enclosure, surrounded by a high board fence. On the gate was this placard:

BE KIND TO THE ANIMALS. COME IN.

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"Let's go in," said Bob, and Betty was more than willing.

"May we go?" whispered the Ragman, clutching his rag baby as he edged along at Betty's side.

"Yes, come on," said the Knight of the Night. And he strolled up to the gate.

It swung open at once, and there, in the ticket-taker's box, stood their old friend the April Fool.

"Walk in," he cried, cheerfully, "walk right in, and see the animals. But mind now, you're to be kind to them."

"Why do you think we would be otherwise?" said Betty, who rather resented his implication.

"Walk in, walk in," continued the April Fool, as if he had not heard her. "Welcome, welcome. Come one, come all."

"Us, too?" inquired the Ragman, timidly.

"Yes, you two," said the April Fool; "but don't let that rag baby hurt the animals. Be sure of that, now."

"She sha'n't," said the Ragman, trotting in. "I'll see to it that she doesn't hit any of them."

THE BAZOO

She sha'n't even speak crossly to them. Indeed, she *can't*. But I wouldn't let her if she could."

"All right, all right," shouted the April Fool, "hurry in, hurry in."

Soon they were all inside, and the big gate clanged to with a bang.

"How good it smells!" said Betty, sniffing the air with her dear little turned-up nose; "just like grandma's kitchen on a baking-day."

"And well it may," said the April Fool, "for you are now in the Bazoo."

"What is a Bazoo?" asked Bob. "I've never heard of such a place."

"Probably not," replied the April Fool. "This is the only one in the world. You see, it came about this way. Once on a time there was a pastry-cook, and she was a marvel in her way. She made the most beautiful cakes and pies and fancy confections you ever saw. Jam tarts and plum puffs and lollipop pies! oh! And one day her master was to give a great feast, and he ordered the pastry-cook to make a sweetmeat that should surpass all her previous efforts.

"So the pastry-cook tried her very bestest,

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and she made such a marvelous concoction of spun sugar and candied fruits and puff-paste and *bonbons* that when her master saw it he was delighted, and turning to the smiling pastry-cook, he exclaimed, 'Well, you *are* a bird!' This puzzled the pastry-cook, for she didn't know what her master meant. But she felt sure it was praise, so she went to an old sage and asked him why the master had called her a bird. The sage didn't know, but he pondered, and finally said: 'If you're a bird, you must be some sort of a bird, you know; and I opine that you must be a Pastry-Cuckoo.'

"This puzzled the pastry-cook more than ever, but she was unwilling to confess her ignorance to her master, so she accepted the sage's decision and believed herself to be a Pastry-Cuckoo.

"'But,' she thought, 'if I'm a bird, I belong in the zoological gardens—in one of those big cages, where there's a tree and a pan of water.' Well, the more she thought it over, the more she couldn't decide; for surely a *Pastry-Cuckoo* ought to be in a bakery, but a *Pastry-Cuckoo*

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ought to be in the zoo. So she decided to make a place for herself, and to have it partake both of the nature of a bake-shop and a menagerie. So she did this. And as it was neither a bakery nor a zoo she called it the Bazoo, and there you are!"

There they were, indeed, and as it all sounded very attractive, Betty said she would be glad to be shown round; and were there any guides?

"I'm the guide," explained the April Fool; "or, if you like, I'll call in the Pastry-Cuckoo herself, and she'll show you round."

Betty said she would like to see the Pastry-Cuckoo, but she hoped the Knight of the Night would also stay with them.

"Can't do it," said he. "I've a lot of things to attend to, but I'll come back for you."

In his usual dignified manner, the Knight of the Night stalked away, and in a moment a strange figure appeared. The newcomer was like a pastry-cook, and yet like a bird, too. She hopped lively around, fluttering her wings, and smiled as she said: "Cuckoo! Cuckoo! How do? How do? I'm very glad to see you."

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Bob and Betty greeted her politely, but the Ragman burst into a fit of laughter.

"My, but you're a sight!" he exclaimed.

"I think I am!" replied the Pastry-Cuckoo. And she strutted proudly about, flapping her wings.

She had a white paper cap on her head, such as pastry-cooks always wear, and a huge white apron was tied at the back of her neck.

"These people want to go round the Bazoo," explained the April Fool.

"Outside or in?" asked the Pastry-Cuckoo.

"Inside, of course," replied the April Fool. "Don't be a pastry-goose."

"I'm not," replied the Pastry-Cuckoo, with a little show of indignation; "but if any one wants to go around anything I should think he'd have to be outside of the thing he's going around."

"Sure enough," said Bob. "I think you're right, Miss Pastry-Cuckoo."

"Well, then," said Betty, always ready to make peace, "we won't go around your Bazoo, we'll go through it."

"Well, wherever we go," said the Ragman,

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impatiently, "let's get started. May I take my rag baby?"

"Yes, if she'll be quiet," said the Pastry-Cuckoo. "I do hate a hullabaloo in the Bazoo."

"Oh, she'll be quiet enough," said the Ragman. "She's sleeping soundly."

"Sleeping *soundly!*" exclaimed the Pastry-Cuckoo. "That will never do! Unless she can sleep quietly, she can't go."

"There! you nearly waked her up!" cried the Ragman, fretfully; "but, no, she's asleep still."

"Well, if she's asleep *still*, you may bring her," said the Pastry-Cuckoo. "And now, come on, let us start. Shall we sing as we go?"

All of the party liked to sing, so they started off in pairs, Betty and the Pastry-Cuckoo first, then Bob and the April Fool, and the Ragman and his rag baby brought up the rear.

As they marched along they all sang this song:

"Oh, the Pastry-Cuckoo
Has a wonderful Bazoo,
Filled full of strange animals novel and new;

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We'll enter and see
What these marvels may be.
Unlock the door, Pastry-Cuckoo, here's the key."

All this time they had been in the vestibule or lobby of the Bazoo, but as they reached the great door which led up to the inner room the rag baby suddenly waked up, climbed up on the Ragman's head, and reached down a big golden key which hung on a high nail.

"Thank you, Miss Rags," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, as she took the key; "if you hadn't climbed up and reached the key we never could have gone in."

Next moment the great door was thrown open and the procession marched merrily in.

"Oh, how pretty!" exclaimed Betty, while Bob expressed his delight by a surprised whistle.

All round the large room were cages made of spun sugar, decorated with cake frosting and candy flowers. In each cage was a queer-looking animal, and these the Pastry-Cuckoo proceeded to exhibit and describe after the manner of a real showman.

"You see, ladies and gentlemen," she began,

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"I'm a sort of an anomaly myself. An anomaly is a creature that's partly animal and partly pastry. So when I found I was one, I concluded to collect all the other anomalies I could find, and give them good homes. They're in cages, as you see, but that doesn't mean they're imprisoned, for the cages have no doors, and the anomalies can come out and go in as they choose."

"Tell us about this one, first, please," said Betty, stopping in front of a cage containing what seemed to be a rabbit, though the little fellow looked as if he had just been out in a snow-storm. He was very fat and spongy, and on top of his head was a piece of citron.

"That," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "is one of my dearest pets. He is the Bath-Bunny. He's made of a Bath bun, you see, and he's covered with powdered sugar. Such a nice little fellow! Here's his poetry. All the anomalies have poetries.

"The Bath Bunny is chubby and fat;
He has citron stuck on to his hat.
And sugar is spread
All over his head,
But he cares not a penny for that."

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"I think he is lovely," said Betty, patting the chubby rabbit, though of course the sugar made her little fingers somewhat sticky. "What does he eat?"

"Oh, he eats sponge-cake if it's made of bath sponges, and he eats bath mats, and Bath brick, and bath towels. He's a hearty little chap, and very proud. Particularly as to his dress. He must have a fresh piece of citron on his head every day, and a shower of clean sugar."

"Is he good-natured?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" said the Pastry-Cuckoo. "Pleasant and affable; never gets into a rage or a temper like those hot cross-buns. I wouldn't have those in my Bazoo. But for solid comfort there's nothing like a Bath bun."

The Bath-Bunny smiled complacently at all this, but said nothing, so the visitors passed on to the next cage.

When they looked in Betty could scarcely repress a little scream, for coiled up on the floor of the cage was a great serpent. But Bob had studied natural history, and he exclaimed:

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"Why, that's a python!"

"Yes," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, with an air of pride, "it is. But more than that, it's a Mince-Python!"

"Sure enough," cried the Ragman, who was looking at the creature intently, "its head is a mince-pie!"

The great serpent blinked lazily at the visitors, and gave a wide yawn, which raised the upper crust of its pie-head and disclosed the mince-meat therein.

"My! doesn't he look good!" exclaimed the Ragman. "I should think you'd eat him!"

"No," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "I never eat my pets. I'm too fond of them. And besides, Mince-Pythons are very rare. I believe this is the only specimen in captivity."

"What does he live on?" asked Bob.

"Oh, he eats meat and fruit, and he drinks cider, but he isn't very good-natured. In fact, he's a bit crusty."

The Mince-Python winked at this, and Betty said, "I'm sure he looks pleasant enough."

"And I am!" exclaimed the Mince-Python.

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"I'm good and I'm sweet, and what more can one expect to be?"

"That's true enough," said the Ragman.
"Goodness and sweetness are enough for any one person. Pass on, Show-lady."

The Pastry-Cuckoo went on, and stopped before the next cage.

"This," she said, impressively, "is a Cream-Puffin."

"A Cream-Puffin! What in the world is that?" exclaimed the Ragman.

"Well," explained the Pastry-Cuckoo, "you know what a puffin is, I suppose. It's a bird. And of course you know what a cream-puff is. So, you see, if a puffin ate cream-puffs enough, he'd be a Cream-Puffin. And that's what this one is."

"Has he poetry?" asked Betty.

"Ah, yes, this is his poetry:

"The Cream-Puffin, who lives upon custard,
One day became angry, and blustered.
When they said, 'Will you bite?'
He replied, 'Well, I might,
If you sprinkle me freely with mustard.'"

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"Did you do it?" inquired the Ragman, who was a curious person.

"No," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "I didn't want him to bite. Why should I?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said the Ragman, "but if I should see a cream-puff I should think of a bite the first thing."

"Ah, but a Cream-Puffin is different," said the Pastry-Cuckoo.

"It seems to be," said the Ragman.

He was growing very hungry, and these repeated allusions to good things to eat made him all the hungrier, but of course he had no desire to eat live animals.

The next cage seemed to be a sort of tank, which was full of water, and swimming around in it was a beautiful creature, which was doubtless a fish of some sort.

"Yes," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, in answer to Betty's inquiry, "it is a jelly-fish. Isn't he beautiful?"

He was, indeed. His head and body were like a fluted mold of wine-jelly and his tail was

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a shining shimmery mass which wagged about translucently.

"Now, a Wine Jelly-Fish," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "is a rare and valuable creature."

"Is it good to eat?" inquired the Ragman.

"Indeed it is," replied the Pastry-Cuckoo; "but you needn't think you can eat this one. He is on exhibition, and besides, he's my friend. I wouldn't eat him for anything."

"Not even for dessert?" said the April Fool. And the Pastry-Cuckoo said, "No."

"You see," she went on, "he's of clear, pure, transparent jelly, carefully molded into shape. He likes winter, because in summer he gets all wobbly, and has to go and sit on an iceberg to keep in shape. Here's his poetry:

"The wine Jelly-Fish will not scold
If the weather's sufficiently cold;
And though the dear creature
Has scarcely a feature,
He's proud of his form, we are told."

The Wine Jelly-Fish smiled at this, and quivered with delight at the admiration he evoked.

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“He is nice,” said Betty, “so soft and round and gentle-looking.”

“Oh, he’s gentle, all right,” said the Pastry-Cuckoo, “but sometimes he gets so soft and shapeless, I have to scare him stiff.”

CHAPTER XIII

MORE ANIMALS

“Oh, oh!” cried Betty, as she saw what was in the next cage; “there’s a kitten, a dear little kitten! May I take it in my hands?”

“Yes,” said the Pastry-Cuckoo, “but be careful with it, for it isn’t an ordinary kitten; it’s a Biscuitten.”

“O-ho!” exclaimed Bob. “Well, it really looks more like a biscuit than a kitten, I think.”

“Do you, now?” said the April Fool, gazing at the Biscuitten attentively. “Seems to me, it’s more kitten than biscuit.”

“Well, it’s lovely, anyway,” declared Betty, who had taken the little cat out of its cage and was fondling it. “I have a kitten at home, named Snowball.”

“Have you?” said the Pastry-Cuckoo, politely. “Well, this one’s name is Dough-Ball.”

The kitten was very cunning, being soft and

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plump, like a fresh tea-biscuit. It was slightly browned on top, and was very round and chubby.

"I wish," said Betty, looking at the Pastry-Cuckoo in her most cajoling manner, "I wish you'd give Dough-Ball to me."

"Well, I will, with pleasure," replied the Pastry-Cuckoo; "and the Biscuitten will be delighted, I'm sure, to belong to such a nice little lady."

Dough-Ball purred contentedly and seemed pleased with the arrangement, and Bob said:

"What does a Biscuitten eat?"

"Oh, give her milk," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "and flour; and if she won't rise in the morning, give her some yeast or baking-powder."

Betty promised to mind all these directions, and then the Ragman began to clamor for a gift also.

"I'm ragged," he said, "and I've no manners, but I'd be grateful for one of your pet animals."

"I don't see why you want it," said the April Fool, "when you've that rag baby to take care of."

"That's just it," replied the Ragman, "I want

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it to amuse her with, when she's awake. She's usually asleep, but when she isn't, she's the crossdest, fretfullest child you ever saw. Now if I had a dear little anomaly pet for her to play with, she'd be good-natured and happy."

The Pastry-Cuckoo thought a while.

"I might give you a Charlotte Rooster," she said.

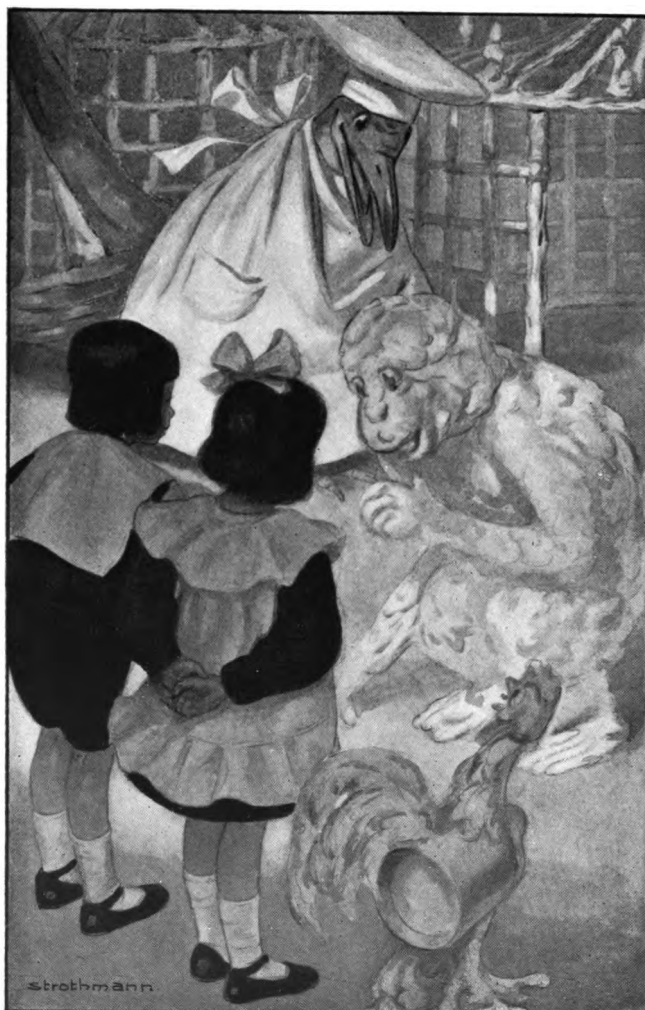
"Oh, goody, goody!" cried the Ragman; "that would be lovely! Because he would crow and wake the rag baby whenever I wished him to."

"Yes," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, doubtfully, "he could if he would. But if he doesn't you can whip him. He's been whipped so much he doesn't mind it at all."

Betty was a little shocked at this, but Bob reminded her that a charlotte russe was always whipped, so doubtless a Charlotte Rooster was much like it.

Then the Pastry-Cuckoo opened a cage, and a Charlotte Rooster came prancing out.

He was a handsome bird, and strutted proudly, cocking his head from side to side.



"That is a Meringue-Outang."

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His body was made of sponge-cake, and his waving tail-feathers were pure white and fluffy, like whipped cream.

He bounced up to the Ragman and crowed so loudly that the rag baby wakened at once and began to cry.

But on seeing the Charlotte Rooster, she stopped crying, smiled broadly, and began to pat him and pull his tail.

"Now you must have a gift," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, turning to Bob, who stood laughing at the rag baby's antics.

"Oh, thank you," said Bob. "If I may choose, I'd like that great beast in the cage behind you."

"That," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "is one of my choicest specimens, but I'll gladly give him to you, because I like you so much. That is a Meringue-Outang. He's as big as you are, but he's made entirely of eggs. He's been beaten all his life; so he'll be glad of a kind master."

"Oh, I'll be kind to him," said Bob. "Let him come with me."

The Meringue-Outang was a big fellow, but

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he was nothing but a floppy froth, and he shuffled mushily along to where Bob stood, and smiled at him.

"I'll go with you," he said; so Bob took the chain which the Meringue-Outang offered him and stood looking at him.

It hardly seemed possible that a meringue could be so big. As Betty said to Bob afterward, it must have taken the beaten whites of a million eggs to make him, but he was so sweet and pliable that everybody liked him.

"Where are you going next?" said the Meringue-Outang, in sugary tones, and Bob replied:

"I don't know, I'm sure. We just wait for things to happen."

"Oh, you do!" said the Meringue-Outang. "Well, nothing ever happens to me but an egg-beater, and I don't think that's much fun."

"But now you're going to stay with me," said Bob, "and I'm sure many things will come to us that are not egg-beaters; so cheer up, old fellow."

At this the Meringue-Outang danced about in glee, and joining hands with Betty and her Bis-

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cuitten, and the Ragman with his rag baby and his Charlotte Rooster, they had a gay merry-go-round.

"But before we go anywhere else," said Bob, "I want to see the other anomalies."

The Pastry-Cuckoo smiled.

"It would take you a long while to see them all," said she; "but I'll show you a few. Here is the Ginger-Snapper."

Bob and Betty laughed outright at this one, for he was so funny. A sort of snapping-turtle he was, with his back made of a big crisp brown ginger-snap and his head of a little one. He scrambled around crying, "Tell them my poetry! Tell them my poetry!"

"Yes, do," said Betty. "I love to hear their poetries."

So the Pastry-Cuckoo recited:

"The young Ginger-Snapper in glee
Said, 'I'm going to swim in the sea.'
When they said, 'You'll be drowned,'
Quite darkly he frowned,
Saying, 'That doesn't matter to me!'"

As the Pastry-Cuckoo finished, the Ginger-Snapper got more and more lively, and finally

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turned somersaults and stood on his head, laughing merrily all the time.

"No, no," he exclaimed, "it doesn't matter to me! Why should it? Ginger-Snaps can't drown. They float. And so—

"That doesn't matter to me—

Tra, la, la—

No, that doesn't matter to me!"

He was such a crazy little fellow that Betty and Bob couldn't help laughing at him, but as the Pastry-Cuckoo beckoned to them they went on to see the other anomalies.

Next was a Corn-Poney, and a funny chap he was.

"Here's his poetry," said the Pastry-Cuckoo:

"The timid Corn-Poney's heart fluttered,

Though never a sentence he uttered;

Until somebody said,

'Are you very well-bred?'

He replied, 'I am very well buttered!'"

"Not bad, was it?" said the Pastry-Cuckoo; "not bad at all for a Corn-Poney. Oh, he's a gay one. He can curvet and prance, he even can dance; oh, he's a gay one, the Corn-Poney."

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"Are there any more?" asked the Ragman.

"There's the Bread-Panther," replied the Pastry-Cuckoo.

"I'm afraid of panthers," said Betty.

"But not of a Bread-Panther," said Bob.

"I'm sure he wouldn't hurt anybody."

"Indeed, he wouldn't," said the Pastry-Cuckoo; "he's the mildest, gentlest beast you ever saw. Indeed, he'd like to run wild, but as he can't, he's quite contented to doze here by the fire."

"Has he a poetry?" asked Betty, who liked rhymes about the queer animals.

"Oh, yes," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "he has a nice poetry. This is it:

"The Bread-Panther remarked with a scowl:

'I wish I could go out and prow!

For it's awfully slow,

To sit here and hold dough,

Though it's all covered up with a towel.'"

As the Bread-Panther growled rather savagely, Betty edged away from him, saying: "Here's a little fellow I haven't seen yet. Who is this?"

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"That," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, "is the Flap-Jackal. He's a mild and unobtrusive little chap, and will never harm any one if they leave him alone. Here's his poetry:

"The Flap-Jackal's dearest desire
Is to lie by a very hot fire;
But whenever he burns
He suddenly turns
With a gesture expressive of ire."

"I guess he's burned now," said the Ragman, as the Flap-Jackal suddenly whirled about, with an agonized expression of countenance.

"Yes, I guess he is," said the Pastry-Cuckoo, calmly; "but it won't hurt him. He's often burned. They require such a hot fire, you know, they can't expect to lie quietly, and they don't."

As the Flap-Jackal was jumping about quite madly, the visitors took little interest in him, and Betty said to the April Fool, in a low voice:

"I've had enough of the Bazoo. Do you think we might go now?"

"Go where?" said the April Fool.

"Oh, anywhere," said Betty. "Out to get lost in the Maze again. And then perhaps the

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Knight of the Night will come and find us, or
Will o' the Wisp and Jack o' Lantern will lead
us in new paths."

"All right," said the April Fool; "out you
go!"

And with a rush and a swish they all flew out
the open door, and Bob and Betty found them-
selves walking alone along one of the green
paths of the Maze.

CHAPTER XIV

A FEW ODD ONES

ON they went, turning now this corner, and now that, dancing through green lanes and running through flowery paths, but, strange to say, they met no one.

"Which way next, Bob?" said Betty, as they came to a place where three roads branched.

"I don't care," said Betty. "Only I don't want to get farther away from Queen Dick's palace; I want to get nearer to it."

"So do I," said Bob; "but I've no idea where it is."

Then Bob sat down on a grassy bank and hugged his knees as he said: "Betty, I believe we're lost again."

"Of course we are," said Betty, cheerfully; "but somebody will find us pretty soon."

"Yes," said Bob, "or else we'll find ourselves."

A FEW ODD ONES

I say, Betty, look at these footprints in the sand. Aren't they queer?"

"Awful queer," said Betty. "They must have been made by funny shoes; they don't seem to have any heels."

"No," said Bob, looking at them closely; "they're made by sandals. That's what they're made by."

"Oh, sandals," cried Betty; "then I believe they're the Sandman's footprints."

"I bet they are!" cried Bob; "and they're all going one way. Let us go that way, too."

"No, let's go the other way," said Betty, "because, you see, he made the footprints coming out from Queen Dick's palace. So if we go the other way we're sure to get in."

"You're a good one," said Bob. "I just believe you're right."

The twins trotted gaily off, but before they had followed the line of footprints very far they heard a loud crow, and straight before them stood a great big gold rooster. He was so dazzling that it made Betty's eyes blink to

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look at him, and she was so surprised that she sat right down on the ground, as she always did when she was astonished.

"Get up, child," said the big gold bird; "I won't hurt you. I'm only the Weathercock."

"Oh!" said Betty. "What are you doing?"

"I'm out hunting for some weather. Have you any to spare?"

"How ridiculous!" said Bob. "We don't carry weather around with us."

"Don't you really, now?" said the Weathercock. "Now I thought you'd have a storm in your pocket, or a hurricane hidden under your cap. Well, I've got to get some weather somewhere, so I must be off."

"Wait a minute," cried Bob. "Where do you usually get weather?"

"I don't see how that affects you," said the Weathercock, haughtily.

"Oh, if you're going to be snippy," said Bob, "we won't talk to you. Come on, Betty."

"No, don't go," said the Weathercock. "I don't mean to be snippy; but if you had to pro-

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vide weather three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, you'd be snippy, too."

"Of course we should," said Betty, kindly, and she patted the bird's golden wing. "Do you have to have weather for every day?"

"Yes," said the Weathercock; "and sometimes I have to change it in the middle of the day, and then they're never satisfied. They don't like this kind of weather, and they don't like that. Why, sometimes we even have to change it after we have advertised it in the morning paper!"

"I like the weather you're giving us now," said Betty.

"Do you?" said the Weathercock, brightening considerably. "Then I'll let it stay just as it is."

"All right," said Bob. "But stay, where are you going?"

"Excuse me," said the Weathercock, "but I really must go. I see somebody coming that I don't like; and I don't like to meet people I don't like."

"Who's coming?" said Betty.

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"The Busybody," said the Weathercock, in a loud whisper, and flapping his gold wings, he was soon out of sight.

In a moment the Busybody appeared. She was quite out of breath, and sitting down on the bank she commenced to talk rapidly.

"Who are you two children? What are you doing here? Where did you come from? Where are you going? You needn't think you can reach Queen Dick's palace, for you can't do it. Nobody ever did. What a funny apron! Where did you get it?"

As she talked the Busybody had risen and was fingering Betty's little white pinafore in a most annoying manner.

"You let my sister alone," said Bob.

"Nice little boy," said the Busybody, turning her attention to him and pinching his chubby face. "Nice rosy cheeks. Where did you get such nice rosy cheeks?"

"Oh, let me alone," said Bob, shaking himself free.

"I could tell you some things if you would listen," said the Busybody.

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"We don't want to hear them," said Betty.

"Oh, yes, you do; all the gossip of the court, all the news of Queen Dick, all the Twelfth Night secrets. Oh, Busybody knows them all."

"I wish you'd tell us one thing," said Betty.

"Oh, you do, do you?" said the Busybody, jeeringly; "and what may that be, little miss?"

"Tell us where we may find the Knight of the Night," said Betty.

"Or Will o' the Wisp," said Bob.

"Or Jack o' Lantern," said Betty.

"Or even the Ragman," said Bob.

The Busybody laughed and looked very wise. "I could tell you all these," she said, "but I haven't time; I'm too busy."

"What have you to do?" said Betty, as the Busybody, in her bustling manner, prepared to go.

"Well, you see," she replied, "I have to be at home when the milk-pitcher comes."

"You mean the milkman," said Bob.

"I do not," said the Busybody; "I mean

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the milk-pitcher. He pitches the milk in at my window, and I have to be there to catch it."

"What is the milk in?" asked Betty, curiously.

"Bottles, of course. Did you think it was in baskets? You're a silly child, and I shall tell people I don't like you."

"That would be very unjust," said Betty, "for you scarcely know me at all."

"I know all I want to of you," said the Busybody, crossly, and she flounced away.

"Well, she was a hateful old thing," said Bob; "I'm glad she's gone."

"So'm I," said Betty.

Round the next corner the twins found themselves at the top of a road, which seemed to lead down to a valley. A little sign-board bore the words:

TO SLEEPY HOLLOW

"That sounds nice, Betty," said Bob; "let's go down."

"It's sort of dark," said Betty.

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"Not with me," cried a well-known voice; and with a whisk and a twirl, Will o' the Wisp stood before them.

"Wow! but we're glad to see you!" said Bob; and Betty said, "I just guess we are!"

"What have you been up to?" said Will o' the Wisp; "and are you going down?"

"Yes, I'd like to go," said Betty. "What's down there?"

"Sleepers," said Will o' the Wisp.

"Oh, the Seven Sleepers," said Bob, a little disappointed.

"No, not the Seven Sleepers," said Will o' the Wisp; "just a few odd ones."

"Come on, then," said Bob. And down they went.

Will o' the Wisp carried his torch in one hand and held Betty's hand in the other, and Bob took Betty's other hand, as they raced downhill.

Sleepy Hollow was a sort of a clearing in a grove, and was filled with beds of roses. On each bed lay a sleeper, and Betty noticed first a little girl of about her own age, while on the

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next bed lay a little boy of about the size of Bob.

“Who are they?” whispered Betty. “Won’t they wake up?”

“Of course,” said Will o’ the Wisp. And flashing his bright torch in the face of each, the two children opened their eyes and bounded from their beds.

“Oh,” cried Betty, “it’s Little Bo-Peep.”

And sure enough, there was no mistaking the little shepherdess gown, with its blue bodice and fluttering ribbons, while a crook and a tall, pointed hat lay near by.

The boy was Little Boy Blue. He wore a funny blue smock frock, and as soon as he awoke he drew a horn from beneath his pillow, and blew a loud blast.

Bob and Betty were delighted to find some children so near their own age, and began at once to make friends.

“Go with us the rest of the way, won’t you?” said Betty, putting her arm around Little Bo-Peep, while Bob and Boy Blue began to show each other the treasures in their pockets.

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"Perhaps," said Bo-Peep, "if Queen Dick will let us. But now come over here and see Mr. Rip. He's the dearest old thing!"

"Who is he?" asked Betty.

"Why, Rip Van Winkle. You know him, don't you?"

"Oh, goody!" cried Bob. "Of course we know Rip Van Winkle; and I'm just awful glad to see him. Where is he?"

"Here," said Boy Blue. And leading the way, he brought them to a large bed of roses, on which lay an old man with long white hair and beard.

"Wake up, Mr. Rip," said Little Bo-Peep, kissing the wrinkled forehead.

The old man opened his blue eyes and sat up.

"Well, well, little folks," he said, "this is a treat, indeed. I'm very glad to see you. And who are these little strangers?"

"We're Bob and Betty," said Bob. "We've always known about you, and we're so glad to see you."

"That's nice, that's nice," said Rip Van

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Winkle. But even as the old man spoke, his eyelids drooped and he almost fell asleep again.

"Now, Mr. Rip," said Little Bo-Peep, "please don't go to sleep. We want you to tell us a story."

"Oh, yes, yes," said Rip Van Winkle, straightening himself up, and opening his eyes very wide, "yes, of course. Well—once upon a time—once upon a time there was—there was—there was——"

The old man's eyes closed entirely this time and he dropped back on his couch.

"It's no use," said Little Boy Blue, who was yawning himself, "you can't keep us awake. Look at Bo-Peep. She's holding her eyes open with her fingers."

"I'm not," said Bo-Peep, folding her arms.

"Well, you were, anyway; and it's no use. We like you, Bob and Betty, but the people in Sleepy Hollow can't stay awake, and that's all there is about it."

Little Boy Blue flung himself on his couch, and in a moment was as sound asleep as ever, and when Betty looked around she saw that

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Little Bo-Peep was asleep just as she had been when they came in.

“Well, this is a nice crowd,” said Bob; “and I’m disgusted with them.”

“So’m I,” said Betty, “and I’m ready to go.”

“Come on, then,” said Will o’ the Wisp. And joining hands, the three ran uphill again.

CHAPTER XV

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'S PALACE

At the top of the hill they all stood and looked at each other.

"Which way next?" said Bob.

"I don't know," said Will o' the Wisp. "I'm only your light, not your guide."

"We don't want a guide," said Bob. "We can find our way around this Maze alone. And I'm going to get to Queen Dick's palace pretty soon now; you see if I don't."

"O-ho," jeered Will o' the Wisp, "you think you're something, don't you? Well, just let me tell you nobody has ever reached Queen Dick's palace, and nobody ever will."

"Oh, I don't know," said Bob, airily. "I think Betty and I can do it. We can do 'most anything."

"Well, take me with you," said Jack o' Lantern, sauntering up, and joining the group.

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"I'd love to see Queen Dick. I've never seen her."

"Hasn't anybody ever seen her?" demanded Bob. "Then, how do you know there is such a person?"

"Because we've always heard of her," said Jack o' Lantern, sitting down on the bank, and leaning his green pumpkin-head against the tree; "and so we know she's there, you know."

"Oh, she's there, all right," said another voice. And with a shriek of delight the twins jumped to greet the Knight of the Night.

Jack grasped his hand, and Betty clambered up into his arms.

"We've missed you so," she said. "Stay with us now, won't you?"

"Where are you going?" said the Knight of the Night, smiling at her.

"Anywhere," said Betty, "if you'll go with us."

"Well," said the Knight of the Night, sitting down on the bank, with a twin on either side of him, "suppose we go to the Sleeping Beauty's palace?"

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"The real Sleeping Beauty?" asked Betty.

"And is she asleep?" said Bob.

"Yes, the real Sleeping Beauty," said the Knight, "and she is asleep—very much asleep."

"Come on, then," said Will o' the Wisp, dancing far ahead as he spoke, but in a moment he flashed back again to say: "Who knows the way? I don't."

"The Knight of the Night knows the way through the Maze," said Betty, confidently, "and he'll take us along all right."

"Off we go, then," said the Knight. And away they started, gay and rollicking as usual.

"Oh," cried Betty, suddenly, "who is that?"

They were passing a sort of niche in the side of the road, where sat an old, old man. He sat at a table made of stone, and so silent was he that he might have been made of stone himself.

"That," said the Knight of the Night, "is Barbarossa."

Will o' the Wisp held his torch in front of the still old face, but the eyes never blinked.

"Is he asleep?" asked Betty.

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"Asleep?" said Jack o' Lantern. "I should say he was. Why, he's been asleep so long that his beard has grown right through the table-slab."

And sure enough, the children could see that the long white beard had grown through the table-slab, and hung down beneath.

"But," said Will o' the Wisp, "it must grow and grow and wind itself three times round the table before he wakes up."

"Wow!" said Bob. "Somebody will have to train it, then."

"No," said the Knight of the Night, "it trains itself. He's a nice old man, Barbarossa, and when awake he's great on giving advice. Still he can talk in his sleep, and if you want any advice he can give it to you just as well as not."

"I don't want any advice," said Betty; "and if I did, I'd ask you." And she cuddled the Knight of the Night's black gauntlet in her two little fat hands.

"I don't want any advice either," said Bob; "that is, not specially. But I'd like to hear

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the old fellow talk, so I'm going to ask him something."

"Do," said Will o' the Wisp, "do. It is fun to hear him."

So, striding up to the strange old man, Bob stuck his hands in his little trousers pockets, and said: "Please, Mr. Barbarossa, I'd like your advice on an important subject."

"Aye," said the old man, opening and shutting his mouth like a clam.

"It's just this," Bob went on. "I want to get a new pet. I've had dogs and kittens, and canary-birds, and guinea-pigs, and I want something different. What would you advise?"

The children waited breathlessly for the answer. Not a muscle of the old man's face moved, except his mouth, which worked solemnly up and down, while he spoke as follows:

"For a domestic, gentle pet
A hippopotamus I'd get;
They're very kind and mild.
I'm sure if you but purchase one
You'll find 'twill make a lot of fun
For any little child.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'S PALACE

"Select one of a medium size,
With glossy fur and soft blue eyes,
Then brush and comb him well.
With wreaths of flowers his forehead deck,
And from a ribbon round his neck
Suspend a silver bell.

"If it should be a rainy day,
Up in the nursery he will play
With Betty and with Bob;
Upon the rocking-horse he'll ride,
Or merrily he'll run and hide
Around behind the hob.

"And when he wants to take a nap,
He'll cuddle up in Betty's lap,
As quiet as a mouse.
Just try it, and you'll soon agree
A hippopotamus should be
A pet in every house."

After he had finished, Barbarossa shut his lips together with a snap, and looked more than ever like a stone image; but his heavy breathing and heaving chest proved him to be very much alive, though very much asleep.

"Ho!" said Bob; "that's a nice kind of advice, that is."

"What can you expect of a man talking in his sleep?" said Betty.

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“Nothing but nonsense,” said Bob. “I’m glad I didn’t want any real advice.”

On went the merry crowd, Will o’ the Wisp flying ahead, always taking the wrong path, and then flashing back again; Jack o’ Lantern plodding steadily along, nodding his heavy green head; and the twins skipping on either side of the Knight of the Night.

“We’re almost there,” said Will o’ the Wisp, as he skipped back to them. “I can hear the buzz of the Drowsy Drones.”

“What are they?” asked Betty.

“The Drowsy Drones are the bees in the hedge,” said the Knight of the Night, “and if you listen you can hear their humming.”

The twins listened, and sure enough they heard a low drowsy humming, as of a million, billion bees.

“Oh, hurry,” said Betty; “I want to see it.”

“There it is,” said the Knight, as they turned a sharp corner. “There’s the palace of the Sleeping Beauty.”

“Oh!” said both twins together, in a tone of great disappointment.

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For they saw nothing but a great, thick, dense, high, black hedge.

The very trees themselves which composed the hedge were thickly overgrown with thorns, and ivies, and woodbine, and mistletoe. It seemed a wall of bur, and brake, and brier; and as there was no gate, it was certainly impossible to get through.

"Ho, do you call that a palace?" cried Bob.
"I call it a woozy wood."

"Can't you see a spire?" asked the Knight of the Night.

The twins looked hard, and sure enough, dimly rising above the tree tops, they could descry a tall gilded spire, from which floated a silken banner.

"Oh, let's go in! Let's go in!" cried Betty, jumping up and down in great excitement. "I want to see the Sleeping Beauty."

"But how shall we get in?" said the Knight of the Night, smiling as he looked down at her.

"I don't know; but you do," said Betty, smiling back again.

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

"Well, I think this is the way," said the Knight of the Night. And he dashed into the thick underbrush.

The trees and shrubs parted at his touch as if by magic, and left a narrow clean path right through the hedge. Will o' the Wisp bounded through after the Knight, the twins followed hand in hand, and Jack o' Lantern shuffled after.

As soon as they were through, the hedge seemed to close itself up again, and the party found themselves in a sort of courtyard, which was rather cold and damp and almost dark.

Indeed, had it not been for Will o' the Wisp's torch and Jack o' Lantern's candle they could not have seen anything. The first thing that attracted Bob's attention was a lot of owls, who sat perched in a row on the limb of a tree. As he looked at them inquiringly, or at least they thought he did, they began to sing in concert:

"We're the wisest birds that ever you knew,
Tu whit, tu whit, tu whoo.
There's nothing at all that we can't tell you,
Tu whit, tu whit, tu whoo.
Although we may be rather small,

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We are wise, wise birds, and we know it all.
And that is why we sit and call,
Tu whit, tu whit, tu whoo."

The owls were only baby owls, and they looked so fluffy and silly that Betty laughed outright.

"Don't laugh," said Will o' the Wisp; "you'll hurt their feelings. Owls are awfully sensitive."

"Nonsense!" said Bob. "They haven't sense enough to be sensitive. But what are all those other birds?"

"Those birds are night-hawks," said the Knight of the Night. "And those other birds aren't birds at all; they're bats."

"Oh, I don't like bats," said Betty, shuddering. "Aren't there any nice birds here?"

"Well, I just guess there are," said Will o' the Wisp, and he danced up with a nightingale perched on his finger.

"Listen," said the Knight of the Night, and the twins listened, while they heard the most beautiful song in all the world.

"Oh," said Bob and Betty, "I didn't know

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a bird could sing so lovely! Mayn't I have him for my very own?"

"Yes, if he's willing," said the Knight of the Night, laughing.

Whereupon the nightingale immediately built himself a nest in Betty's apron pocket, which quite proved his willingness.

"What are all those little white things that fly about everywhere?" asked Jack.

"Those are night-moths," said Will o' the Wisp. "They're like snowflakes, you know. See, you can take a handful this way, and make a ball of them. But it isn't a snowball."

"No," said Bob, laughing. "It's a moth-ball."

"Yes," said Will o' the Wisp, "a night-moth-ball."

"But you haven't seen all the animals yet," said Jack o' Lantern; "there are moles and cats, and——"

"I don't want to see moles," said Betty, "and I can see cats at home. I want to see the Sleeping Beauty."

"And you shall," said the Knight of the Night.

CHAPTER XVI

INSIDE THE PALACE

SOFTLY, and with a hushed step, the Knight of the Night led the way, and the others followed on tiptoe.

They passed under great archways and through long, columned corridors. They went by dainty flower-beds filled with blooming poppies and mandragora. They saw lovely fountains, whose crystal spray splashed slowly with a lulling sound; and at last they came to the great entrance of the palace itself.

On either side of the massive doorway were six footmen dressed in gorgeous red and gold livery. But though these footmen stood upright, straight and stiff, it was easily to be seen they were all sound asleep.

"Don't they look funny?" said Bob, choking back a giggle; but Betty was rather awed by the sight, and pulled at Bob's sleeve to make him keep still.

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"Ho, you can't waken them," said Will o' the Wisp, as he danced around the sleeping footmen, flashing his torch in their faces and pinching their long noses.

"No, you can't," said the Knight of the Night. "They won't waken for a hundred years. Meanwhile, we'll just let ourselves in."

Stalking up the palace steps, the Knight of the Night seized the palace door by its great handle and flung it wide open.

"Enter," he said, in his calm, dignified way, and they all went in.

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, with an enraptured gasp, and then she sat right down on the floor.

Betty always did this when overcome with excitement or admiration. But Bob rushed madly around, looking at everything and asking innumerable questions.

"What a scrumptious palace!" he cried. "I never saw anything like it before. Does it belong to a king? Is everybody asleep in it? It's a shame to shut up this beauty place for a hundred years."

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It certainly did seem a shame, for the palace was the most gorgeous place that could be imagined. It was built of marble and gold, and was decorated with paintings and frescoes, and tapestries of marvelous beauty and value.

"This is only the entrance," said the Knight of the Night; "follow me."

On they went into an even more elaborate apartment, which, the Knight told them, was the throne-room. At one end was the throne, a massive high structure, reached by marble steps, carpeted with red velvet. On the throne sat the King, in robes of purple and ermine, and sound asleep.

"May I go up and look at him?" whispered Betty. "I've never seen a real king."

"Of course," said the Knight. "Shake hands with him if you like. You can't wake him, you know."

Together the twins started up the steps, but as Bob went up two at a time, he reached the top first, and had the old King's hand in his when Betty arrived.

"Shake his other hand, Betty," cried Bob.

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"You may never get a chance to shake hands with a king again."

Betty grasped the other hand of the fat old King, and the two children shook the royal hands like pump-handles.

"There, there," called out the Knight of the Night, laughing. "There's no danger of waking him; but you needn't dislocate his wrists, nor break his arms."

The children left the sleeping King, and transferred their attention to the courtiers, who sat around in various attitudes.

"You see," said Will o' the Wisp, "they all fell asleep at once, no matter what they were doing, and this old fellow was just taking a pinch of snuff."

Sure enough, one gorgeous belaced gentleman held a pinch of snuff half-way between his fingers and his nose, and was doomed to hold it there for a hundred years. But he didn't seem to mind, for he was smiling broadly and breathing deeply, as if lost in the pleasantest dreams.

"Where's the Queen?" asked Betty.



The two children shook the royal hands like pump handles.

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"You'll see her soon," said the Knight of the Night; "but now we will go into the dining-hall."

In the great banquet-hall, where they went next, it was the same story.

A sumptuous repast was half prepared, and liveried lackeys had paused midway in their occupations. One white-capped steward was bringing in a golden pheasant on a huge platter, which he held high above his head.

It made Betty feel tired to look at his upstretched arms, but Will o' the Wisp said:

"Oh, that's nothing; he doesn't feel it at all."

More than a score of stewards, cooks, and servers had been busy in the banquet-hall, and all had paused just as they were, and there remained.

It seemed to the twins the most wonderful sight they had ever seen, but the other observers seemed to take it as a matter of course.

Into the royal kitchen they went next, and here were cooks, bakers, confectioners, and scullions, each motionless in his place.

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"It's like a picture," said Betty, standing in the doorway and looking in.

"I like moving pictures better," said Bob.

"You'll have to wait a hundred years, my boy," said the Knight of the Night, "if you want to see these pictures move."

"Can't wait," said Bob; "I'm in too much of a hurry."

On they went to the Queen's apartments, and there at her dressing-table in the hands of her tirewomen sat the beautiful Queen. She wore a white dressing-gown, and her maids of honor hovered about her, one bringing powder, one rouge, and one patches. Just entering the room was the lady of the robes, bringing a court costume of ruby velvet and ermine. The sleeping Queen was so beautiful that Betty said:

"She must be the Sleeping Beauty; isn't she?"

"No," said the Knight of the Night; "the Sleeping Beauty is the Princess."

"Well, I want to see her," said Betty. "Now, right away!"

"Come, then," said the Knight of the Night.

INSIDE THE PALACE

And taking Betty's hand, he led her along the corridors to a beautiful apartment, which was but dimly lighted.

"A little more light here," cried the Knight of the Night to Will o' the Wisp; "we can scarcely see."

Will o' the Wisp danced in, and as his torch lighted up the room Betty could not repress a little scream of delight. The room was hung with soft white silk, embroidered with pink roses, and on a couch lay the beautiful sleeping Princess.

The face on the gold-fringed pillow was exquisitely fair and sweet, and the long black hair of the Princess lay in loose curls, falling over the coverlet and hanging down to the floor.

"I wish she'd wake up," said Betty.

"She can't," said the Knight of the Night; "the hundred years are not yet up."

"May I kiss her?" said Betty.

"Oh, yes," said the Knight; "and if she were awake she'd be glad to kiss you."

Betty lightly kissed the warm rosy cheeks of the Princess and Bob kissed her hand.

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As they were leaving the room, Betty spied a dear fluffy little kitten asleep on a blue-satin cushion.

"Oh, what a dear kitty!" she cried. "Mayn't I have it for my own?"

"Yes," said the Knight, laughing, "if you want such a sleepy cat."

"Oh, I'll keep her till she wakes up," said Betty. And she stuffed the kitten into her other apron pocket.

Next they went through the music-hall. This was very funny, for the musicians had gone to sleep handling their flutes and violins, and the choir of singers, who had been warbling a chorus, had gone to sleep with their mouths wide open.

Bob and Betty laughed aloud at the ridiculous singers, and Bob said, decidedly:

"I know one thing: if they have to keep their mouths open for a hundred years, they'll never get them shut again."

"That's all you know about it," said frisky Will o' the Wisp, as he danced around, waving his torch in the faces of the sleepers. "O-ho,

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there's another sleeper added to the crowd." And as Will o' the Wisp pointed, they saw Jack o' Lantern rolled up into a ball in a big easy chair, and sound asleep.

"He'll have to be wakened," said the Knight of the Night, "for we must go on now."

"I'll waken him," said Will o' the Wisp. And dancing across the room, he tickled Jack o' Lantern with his lighted torch.

"What's the matter?" cried Jack o' Lantern, yawning.

"The matter is that we're going to move on, old fellow. Come on."

"Are you ready, children?" asked the Knight of the Night. "Have you seen all you want to of the palace?"

"Yes," said Betty. "It's very pretty, it's lovely, but we've seen all of it, and I'm ready to go. I want to get to Queen Dick's palace."

"So do I," said Bob. "Is it nicer than this?" he asked the Knight of the Night.

But the Knight of the Night only smiled.

CHAPTER XVII

JACK PUDDING

ON through the winding paths of the Maze they went, rounding curves and turning corners, and as they were going through a shady nook they saw a sorry-looking figure sitting on a rude bench. He had the appearance of a court jester. His costume was striped red and white, and his fool's cap showed the same colors. But though his garb was gay, his face was not, and the poor fellow looked sad and discontented.

"Why, that's Jack Pudding," cried Will o' the Wisp, dancing up to the young man. "What is the matter, Jack, that you look so gloomy?"

"Matter enough," replied Jack Pudding; "I've lost my grandchild."

"Your grandchild!" exclaimed Betty. "Have you got one?"

"Why, of course I've not," replied Jack Pudding, peevishly. "Didn't I just tell you I'd lost it?"

JACK PUDDING

"But you look too young ever to have had a grandchild," said Bob.

"Oh, not a grandchild," said Jack Pudding; "but a grand child. My pretty bauble, the darling of my heart, my grand, handsome child is lost, and I shall never find it again."

"Oh!" said Betty. "Do you mean that sort of a stick thing, with the doll's head on it, and a dress very much like your own?"

"Yes," said Jack Pudding, eagerly, "that's what I mean. Have you seen it?"

"No," said Betty; "but I'll help you look for it."

"It's no use," said Jack Pudding, despondently. "I've hunted low and high, I have wondered fro and to, walking down and up the paths, peering there and here, but I can not find it. I shall never see my pretty bauble again."

"Oh, don't despair," said Bob, cheerfully. "If we all hunt perhaps we can find it."

"No," said Jack Pudding, "it can't be found, and I shall just sit here on this rude bench, and mope."

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"Is the bench very rude?" asked Jack o' Lantern.

"No," said Jack Pudding, "not very rude. It didn't kick me or say anything like that, but it wouldn't answer when I spoke to it, and I call that rudeness, don't you?"

As this question seemed to be addressed to Betty, she replied:

"Well, it would be rude in a person, but I don't think I should blame a poor bench."

"No," said Jack Pudding, thoughtfully, "I suppose not. And it *is* a poor bench; it hasn't a penny to its name."

"Well, cheer up, Jack Pudding," said Will o' the Wisp, who had danced away, and whisked back again; "here's your old bauble. I found it sticking head downward in the mud."

"Oh, I remember now," said Jack Pudding, his face breaking into smiles. "I stuck him there the other day so I would know where to find him when I wanted him. Heyday! Hurrah! Now we can have some fun."

Jack Pudding, having recovered his bauble, was in the best of spirits, and he capered wildly

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around, tossing up his cap and jingling the bells which hung from the edge of his tunic.

"Why are you out here, Jack Pudding?" asked the Knight of the Night, looking kindly at the merry fellow. "Aren't you wanted at court?"

"I'm just going there," replied Jack Pudding; "but first I must find my peacock."

"You seem to be unfortunate," said Bob. "You lost your bauble, and now have you lost your peacock?"

"Well, he isn't exactly lost," said Jack Pudding; "you see, I put him in a pail of water to keep him fresh, and he's just round the next corner, but I don't know which corner."

"I shouldn't think you would," said Betty, laughing; "there are so many corners, and nobody seems to know his way through the Maze except the Knight of the Night."

"Oh, yes, they do," said the Knight, smiling down at Betty. "Will o' the Wisp knows the way, and he will guide you for a time now, as I am called away by affairs of state."

Betty always saw the Knight depart with a

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feeling of regret, but she felt sure he would soon return, so she walked along by Jack Pudding's side, much amused by the funny fellow.

"You see," he was saying, "my peacock isn't a real one. It's just one I made myself."

"What did you make it out of?" asked Bob.

"Well," said Jack Pudding, "I hadn't anything to make it out of except sweet peas; and so it's a sweet-peacock."

"It must be pretty," said Betty.

"Oh, it is," said Jack Pudding; "it's lovely."

By this time Will o' the Wisp had led them around a great many corners, and they came suddenly upon the sweet-peacock in his pail of water. Jack Pudding gave a cry of delight, and taking the mass of flowers from the pail, he shook off the drops of water and set the bird down on the ground. It strutted proudly about, and it looked exactly like an ordinary peacock, except that its spreading tail feathers were blossoms of sweet peas.

"What a beautiful bird!" cried Betty.

And Bob exclaimed, "I never saw anything so handsome!"

JACK PUDDING

"Yes," said Jack Pudding, "he is a beauty. And now that I have him and my grand child, I'm off for the court. Won't you all go with me?"

"Is it Queen Dick's palace?" asked Betty, who was most anxious to reach that wonderful place.

"Well, no," said Jack Pudding, "but 'tisn't far from it. Why, after you leave our court, you've only got to turn twenty-three times, and twist six, and cross eight paths and four bridges, and if they're the right ones, Queen Dick's palace is just around the bend."

"Whose court are you talking about?" asked Bob.

"It's the Court of Misrule," replied Jack Pudding. "Of course we haven't any king or queen as yet, but this is Twelfth Night, and we're going to have revels. Will you come?"

"Twelfth Night revels!" exclaimed Jack o' Lantern. "That's just my sort. I guess we *will* come. Let's go at once."

Will o' the Wisp danced away, and the

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others followed, the sweet-peacock trotting along by Betty's side.

"Where is the place?" asked Bob. "Is it very far?"

"Well," said Jack Pudding, "it's in latitude 98° north and longitude 190° west, and it's as far as a farthing."

But very soon they reached the Court of Misrule, and Jack Pudding gallantly ushered the party into a large and brilliantly lighted hall. The great oak rafters were hung with holly and evergreen, and in a wide fireplace, at one end of the hall, burned an enormous Yule log. At the other end of the room was what seemed to be a throne, or sort of raised platform, on which were two big red velvet arm-chairs.

A crowd of merry people were in the room, and they were laughing and dancing and playing games. As our friends entered, two personages came to greet them. One wore a strange costume, each piece of which seemed to be selected without regard to any other part. He had one high leather boot and one low red

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slipper. His trousers were green and his coat was red, and his coat was put on upside down. The sash was round his neck, and over his head he carried three open umbrellas.

"I'm the Lord of Misrule," he announced, as, brandishing his umbrellas, he greeted his guests; "and this," he added, turning to his companion, "is my friend, the Abbot of Unreason."

The Abbot was a solemn-looking man, dressed all in black; but when he was introduced he smiled so broadly that Betty felt sure he was as funny as the other.

"Now, as Lord of Misrule," said the pompous and important personage, "my word is law, and my lightest wish must be obeyed. First we will cut the Twelfth Night cake. Let it be brought in."

As the Lord of Misrule spoke he clapped his hands, and all the crowd of people who were merrymaking ceased their frolic and seated themselves in the chairs which were ranged round the room.

Jack o' Lantern sat down on the throne steps

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and promptly fell asleep. Will o' the Wisp danced about, cutting up his usual antics, and Bob and Betty, not knowing what else to do, seated themselves in two near-by chairs, which chanced to be vacant. The Lord of Misrule strutted grandly up and down the room.

"First," said he, "first—first—Abbot, what does come first?"

"I dunno," said the Abbot of Unreason.

"Of course you don't," said the Lord of Misrule, angrily; "you never know anything."

"No," said the Abbot, meekly; "and I don't pretend to."

"Well, I do pretend to," said the Lord of Misrule.

"Well, if you pretend to know things," said the Abbot, "what do you pretend is going to happen first?"

"First," said the Lord of Misrule, "you will read aloud to the assembled court from our Catalogue of Doggerel."

"Oh," said the Abbot.

He looked so blankly vacant as he said "Oh" that Bob and Betty couldn't help giggling. The

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Abbot had long, lank, light hair that hung in straight locks down either shoulder of his black cassock.

"Where is the Catalogue of Doggerel?" said the Lord of Misrule.

"It isn't written yet, your lordship."

"Then speak it," said the Lord of Misrule.

"Oh, I can't speak pieces," said the Abbot, putting one finger in his mouth.

"Try!" said the Lord of Misrule, in a loud, thunderous voice. And the scared Abbot, hopping up to one of the lower steps of the throne, recited as follows:

KATY CUTTER'S CAT

Katy Cutter caught a kitten.

"Cats," said she, "are kittle cattle;

So I'll keep it in a kettle,

Carefully concealed in cotton."

When the cruel, cross cat-catcher

Came for Katy Cutter's kitten

'Twas curled up in Katy's kettle,

So the catcher couldn't catch it.

That's why clever Katy Cutter

Kept her kitten in a kettle.

CHAPTER XVIII

KING AND QUEEN

AFTER the Abbot's recitation, the Lord of Misrule, who had been pacing rapidly up and down the room, stood stock still in the center of the floor and clapped his hands three times. Immediately a white-capped steward appeared.

"The Twelfth Night cake," said the Lord of Misrule, in an imperious voice. "Is it ready?"

"Yes, my lord," said the steward; "all ready to be cut."

"Bring it in," said the Lord of Misrule. And he stalked up and down the room more rapidly than ever.

The steward disappeared, and in a few moments reappeared with a huge cake on a huge platter.

"Now," said the Lord of Misrule, "I will pass this cake to each guest in turn. Each guest shall cut a slice. There is a bean in the

KING AND QUEEN

cake, and he or she who cuts the slice which holds the bean shall be declared King or Queen of the Twelfth Night revels."

"I thought you were King," said Betty, looking up at the grotesque figure of the Lord of Misrule.

"No, no, little lady," he replied; "mine is but a brief authority. Whoever gets the bean in the cake, and whoever is therefore King or Queen of the Twelfth Night revels, shall rule me with a powerful scepter."

"Oh," said Betty.

With great solemnity the Abbot of Unreason marched up and took the great cake on its great platter from the steward, and dropping on one knee, he held it up to the Lord of Misrule. Grasping a huge knife the Lord of Misrule slashed into the center of the cake, and leaving the knife sticking there, bade the Abbot to pass it to each of the company. Solemnly the Abbot did this. Each guest in turn cut a slice of the cake, each hoping that to his or her lot would fall the significant bean.

At last it was Will o' the Wisp's turn.

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Seizing the knife, he cut himself a thick slice, saying:

“Well do I know I will get the bean; ’tis but my right. And then shall I be King of the Twelfth Night revels.”

“Nay,” said Jack o’ Lantern, wakened up by the commotion going on, “nay, ’tis I who shall get the bean. ’Tis my right, and right wisely shall I reign over Twelfth Night.”

“Thou loon!” cried Will o’ the Wisp. “Thy pumpkin-head is all unfit to wear a king’s crown.”

Then Will o’ the Wisp slashed off his slice of cake and Jack o’ Lantern calmly carved his, but in neither slice appeared the hoped-for bean.

And now it was Betty’s turn. She grasped the sharp knife in her little hands, and with a clean stroke cut off a slice of the Twelfth Night cake.

“It cuts hard,” she said, pushing the knife through with difficulty.

“I should think it would,” cried Bob, taking the knife as she finished. “I say, Betty, you’ve cut right through the bean; the other half is in

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my slice." And Bob cut off his own slice and began to eat it with great relish.

"What's this?" cried the Lord of Misrule, prancing up.

"Why, my lord," said the Abbot of Unreason, "these two children have the bean. A half in each of their slices of cake."

"So? So?" said the Lord of Misrule. "The bean cut in two? Such a thing never happened before. What can we do? What can we do?"

"What, indeed!" said the Abbot of Unreason, who had set down the cake and was wringing his hands in dismay.

"Two sovereigns will be impossible," said the Lord of Misrule.

"Quite impossible, your lordship," said the Abbot.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Betty. "Two sovereigns are all right if they're twins. I'll be Queen, and Bob King."

"Will you?" said the Lord of Misrule, doubtfully. "But you don't know how."

"No," said Betty; "but you don't either."

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"Nobody does," said Bob.

"Oh, well," said the Lord of Misrule, "you don't have to know how. And if you two children will be King and Queen it will save me a great deal of time, and I can go on making paper chickens."

"What do you do with paper chickens?" asked Betty, curiously.

"Never you mind," said the Lord of Misrule, mysteriously; "you'll have all you can do to get ready to be Queen."

"To get ready?" repeated Betty. "Pray, what do we have to do to get ready?"

"You have to learn the rules," said the Lord of Misrule.

"Where are the rules?" asked Bob.

"Sure enough, where are the rules, Abbot?" said the Lord of Misrule.

"They're lost," said the Abbot, briefly.

"Oh, are they?" said the Lord of Misrule. Then turning to Betty, he added:

"We grieve to state, your Majesty, that the Royal Rules are lost. You will therefore be obliged to make your own rules."

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"Oh, we can do that," said Bob, easily; "in fact, we'd rather do it. Shall we take our seats on the throne now?"

"Good gracious, no!" cried the Lord of Misrule. "You haven't your Coronation costumes yet."

"Where are they?" said Bob and Betty. "Are they ready?"

"All ready," said the Lord of Misrule. And clapping his hands three times, some lackeys appeared bearing garments of wonderful color and texture. Half a dozen maids of honor came in, and almost before she knew it little Betty was robed in marvelous regal garments. A quilted petticoat of white satin, a ruby velvet train heavily embroidered with gold, and a mantle of white silk studded with jewels. But when Betty beheld Bob she laughed outright, so strange did he look.

He wore a court suit of light-blue satin, while from one shoulder hung a velvet cape sown with pearls. A sword hung at his side, and round his neck was a huge white ruff.

Both twins fell to laughing, but the Abbot

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of Unreason said, "Such frivolity ill beseems royalty." So the twins straightened their faces lest their newly acquired royalty be snatched away from them.

"Now shall we sit in the big chairs?" asked Betty, who was anxious to begin her new experience as a reigning Queen.

"No," said the Lord of Misrule; "you must first lead the Coronation march." With the Abbot at his side, the Lord of Misrule started to march round the room. Bob and Betty followed, walking slowly by reason of their heavy and unaccustomed garb. Demurely after them came Will o' the Wisp and Jack o' Lantern, and looking backward, Betty was surprised to see that the frisky Will o' the Wisp and the slow, stupid Jack o' Lantern marched carefully along, keeping perfect time with the rest. After these principals came the crowd of revelers, marching two by two. Round the room they marched, and round and round again, until Bob and Betty were ready to drop with fatigue, and Bob announced: "We've marched long enough, and we want to be crowned now."

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"Why didn't you say so sooner?" cried the Lord of Misrule. "I thought you wanted to march all night and all day to-morrow."

"Well, we don't," said Bob; "and if there's any crowning to be done, let it be done right away."

"Certainly, certainly," said the Lord of Misrule; and the Abbot of Unreason said, "Certainly, certainly."

With elaborate courtesy the Lord of Misrule took Betty's hand and assisted her up the steps of the throne and seated her in one of the great chairs.

The Abbot of Unreason did likewise for Bob, and when the two children were seated the Lord and the Abbot went scurrying after the crowns. So hasty were they that they bumped together in the middle of the room, and almost knocked each other down.

"Where are the crowns?" they exclaimed at exactly the same moment, and so they were each obliged to answer, "I don't know," at the same time.

"You do know," said both.

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"I don't," said both again. And it is hard to say what the result would have been but that Will o' the Wisp danced in just then with the missing crowns.

"Just as I expected," said the Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason together.

"Well," said Bob, impatiently, "now that you have the crowns, let the Coronation go on."

"Yes, yes, of course," said the Lord of Misrule. "We are all ready." And taking one crown himself and giving one to the Abbot, they ran up the steps to the throne.

With great care the crowns were placed on the heads of the twins.

"You are now King and Queen of Twelfth Night," said the Lord of Misrule, "and the Abbot of Unreason and myself are your humble slaves. Whatever your commands, they shall be obeyed; whatever your wishes, they shall be fulfilled."

"Now, that's nice," said Bob. "I've always thought I should like to be a king. Aren't you glad, Betty?"

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"Yes," said Betty, a little hesitatingly; "but I don't know just what to do."

"Oh, you'll soon learn," said Bob, as he swayed his scepter with an air of great magnificence. "It comes awfully easy to me."

And really there seemed nothing to do but to sit still and receive the honors which were rapidly thrust upon them.

The Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason seated themselves on either side of the young King and Queen, and Will o' the Wisp and Jack o' Lantern sat at their feet. Jack Pudding announced that as he was Court Jester, his place was at the Queen's right hand. So he stood beside her chair and explained to her what was going on.

"First," he whispered, "the chorus will come in."

"What kind of a chorus?" asked Betty.

"Oh, the court singers," returned Jack Pudding; "they will sing a song in honor of our new King and Queen."

"That will be very nice," said Betty. And even as she spoke the singers came trooping in.

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There were perhaps a dozen, and they were most picturesque-looking people. They wore long white robes, with garlands of flowers over their shoulders, and keeping time to the clash of cymbals, they sang this ode:

“ Let the cymbals cling, clang, cling,
For Betty is Queen and Bob is King.
We greet them with a roundelay,
Betty so pretty and Bob so gay.

“ Then merrily let our voices ring,
For Betty is Queen and Bob is King.
And the cymbals cling! cling! cling! ”

CHAPTER XIX

THE SAGE AND THE FOOLS

AFTER the singers had departed, came an old man with long white hair and beard.

"Who is that?" asked Betty of Jack Pudding.

"That is the Sage," he replied.

"And what does he do?" asked Bob.

"Oh, he's very wise," whispered Jack Pudding; "but don't talk now, you may interrupt his thoughts."

As the old man came slowly in, the Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason went to meet him and assisted him to a seat.

Then the Lord of Misrule announced, in a loud voice:

"This is Solon Solomon, the wise Sage. He can give information on any subject. He can answer any question. As a great honor he

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has consented to come here to-night, in order that he may give our new King and Queen some wise and valuable advice."

"Yes," said the Abbot of Unreason; "they are but young and ignorant children, and sorely do they need advice."

"What is he going to advise us about?" asked Bob.

"Hush," said the Lord of Misrule. "If the great and profound Sage deigns to give counsel, accept whatever it may be without question."

"Now," said the Abbot of Unreason, "let us all be quiet, that the great Sage may deeply ponder on his learned discourse."

The Sage bowed his head on his hands, the Lord of Misrule and the Abbot stood waiting, Jack Pudding folded his hands and stood quietly, Jack o' Lantern went to sleep, and even Will o' the Wisp stopped dancing around and listened for the Sage's word.

For a long time they all sat thus, until Bob and Betty grew tired, and Bob announced, in a firm and decided voice:

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"I'm now King of the Court of Misrule, and I decree that the old Sage shall speak at once, if he has anything to say."

Solon Solomon raised his bowed head, and clasping his hands together, rolled his eyes upward and drew a long breath, as if preparing to speak. All in the room listened breathlessly for words of wisdom. The old Sage looked at the twins, and extending his hand, he shook his long bony forefinger at them.

"O King and Queen," he said, "attend and hear, and listen unto the wisdom of Solon Solomon. Hearken unto advice of great importance, and cherish it ever in thy mind."

The Sage stopped speaking, and deep silence followed again.

"Well, what is the advice?" said Betty, impatiently. "I'll promise to hear and remember it, if you'll only tell it to us and get through with it."

"Nay, O child Queen," said the Sage; "advice like mine may not be given and received hastily or thoughtlessly. But lend thine ear, and I will drop into it a pearl of wisdom. It

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is this: When hungry, eat; when sleepy, go to bed."

The Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason closed their eyes and clasped their hands, lost in admiration of the wisdom of the great Sage. All of the other hearers, except, perhaps, the King and Queen, seemed to be very much impressed. Murmurs of admiration ran through the audience and various ones were heard to say, "How true!" and "What wondrous wisdom!"

But Bob waved his scepter and cried out:

"I say it's nonsense to call that wisdom. Why, I've known those things all my life."

At this there was great consternation. Exclamations were heard on all sides, and the Lord of Misrule declared:

"Then thou art wise, O King, even beyond the wisdom of the great Sage. To thee we bow, and thine is our homage. And our noble Queen, did she, too, know these great truths before?"

"Of course I did," said Betty; "I'm not a goose."

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"Then," said the Abbot of Unreason, "to our great Queen also is our homage due, our fair and lovely Queen, who is not a goose."

The Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason made their speeches so solemnly that Bob and Betty nearly choked with laughter.

"And furthermore," said Bob, "since we are your noble King and Queen, whom you have crowned and placed upon your throne; since we have knowledge, and greater than that of your Sage, I hereby decree that Solon Solomon be sent back to his home, and that our Royal Highnesses be entertained with something more amusing."

"The King's word is law," said the Lord of Misrule. "And since the King cares not for the wisdom of Sages, perchance his Royal Highness will be pleased with the folly of Fools."

There was a jingling of bells, a blare of trumpets, and sounds of merry laughter, and into the great hall came dashing a crowd of Fools.

Jack Pudding recognized many of his friends, and sprang down to meet them. Bob

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and Betty recognized many old friends, too, and forgetting the dignity of their position, they ran down the steps of the throne and eagerly grasped the hands of the April Fool.

"We're awful glad to see you again," said Betty, smiling up at the funny fellow.

"Indeed, we are," added Bob.

"And I'm glad to see you, too," said the April Fool. "But my, you've grown grand since you visited the May Queen!"

"Yes, we're King and Queen ourselves," said Bob, proudly. And he strutted around in his royal robes.

"I look nice, too, don't I?" said Betty, as she spread her court train and waited for admiration.

"You do, indeed," said the April Fool; "and I'm just right down glad to see you as you are. You're nice children, and you deserve good fortune, if anybody ever did. Now I'm such a fool that if I were a King and Queen I wouldn't know how to behave."

"To tell the truth," said Bob, "we don't know how to behave ourselves."

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"But," said the Lord of Misrule, "on Twelfth Night no one wants to behave. The thing to do is to misbehave."

"True enough," said the April Fool. "But come with me, O King and Queen, that I may present you to some of my friends."

Taking their Royal Highnesses by their little hands, the April Fool led them across the room to a jolly-looking group.

"I didn't know that Fools could be so nice," said Betty, looking at the gaily dressed crowd with admiration.

And truly it was a handsome sight.

The Fools were jesters of rich and noble courts, and their motley clothes were of richest silks and brightest colors. They were gay with feathers and jingling with bells, and their merry, jovial faces were adorned with the broadest smiles.

Beside the court Fools, there were Punchinello, Pierrots, and Clowns.

As Bob and Betty joined the group the Fools joined hands and made a circle round the twins, while they sang this roundelay:

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“Fools so merry and Fools so gay
Join to sing a roundelay.
Full of foolish mirth and cheer,
For Twelfth Night comes but once a year.

“The merriest place in all the Maze,
Then let the Yule log brightly blaze.
We'll trim the Christmas tree with shears,
And all wear earrings in our ears.

“The King shall make us each a gift
Of a circular sieve that will not sift.
While each of his subjects shall give to him
A feathered fish that can not swim.

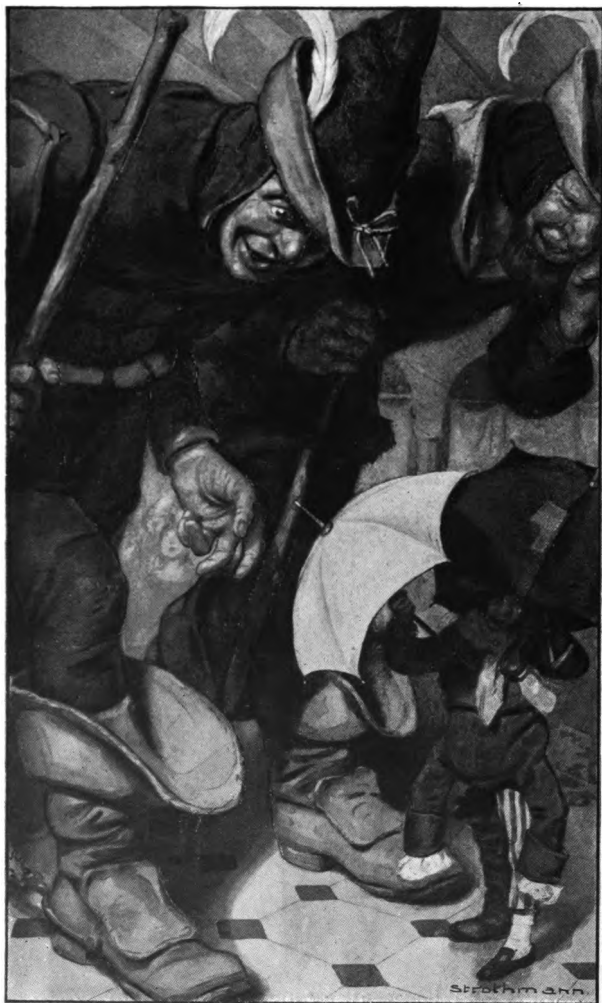
“As none of us wishes to go to sea,
We'll all climb up in the Christmas tree.
And there we'll stay till the Royal Twins
Present us each with a paper of pins.”

By the time the Fools had finished singing this ridiculous song the twins were shouting with laughter. Then suddenly the Lord of Misrule dashed into the ring, scattered the Fools right and left, and said to the twins:

“Back to your thrones. Quick!”

“Why?” said Bob, who had no intention of being ordered about as if he were not a King.

“The Giants are coming,” replied the Lord of Misrule.



Approaching the throne, they bowed low.

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"Oh," said the Abbot of Unreason, "then let the King and Queen be found on their thrones in proper order."

Bob and Betty didn't quite know what it all meant, but they scurried to their places and sat with great dignity awaiting the new guests, whoever they might be.

They had no sooner taken their places in the great chairs than the Lord of Misrule, in a loud voice, announced:

"Mumbo Jumbo and Hurlo Thrumbo."

As he spoke two Giants entered the room. They were about four times as large as ordinary men, and their presence in the Twelfth Night hall made all the rest seem like dwarfs.

Approaching the throne, they bowed low, saying:

"We greet you, Royal Highnesses, we wish you all good, and we bring you gifts."

"Much obliged for the good wishes," said Bob, "and we'd be pleased to see your gifts."

"Oh, as to gifts," said Mumbo Jumbo, "you can have anything you choose. We give you three wishes apiece. What will you take?"

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"Oh," cried Betty, clasping her rosy little fat hands, "can we have anything we want?"

"Yes," said Hurlo Thrumbo, "anything."

"Then," said Betty, ecstatically, "I choose a doll's house."

"Certainly," said Mumbo Jumbo. And from his great pocket he drew the loveliest doll's house you ever saw. It was furnished completely, even to a piano-lamp and a telephone.

Betty screamed with glee, and forgetting her royalty, flew down the steps of the throne and sat on the floor in front of the beautiful toy.

Meanwhile Bob was choosing.

"I think," said he, slowly, "I'd like a patent swing. The kind that works itself, you know."

Almost as he spoke Hurlo Thrumbo pulled from his pocket a marvelous patent swing that would work itself and would swing up high as any child could possibly want to go.

"Now," said Betty, "I'll take a pony-cart."

Bob looked at his sister in amazement, but

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Mumbo Jumbo, seeming not a bit surprised, took a pony-cart from his other pocket and set it down in front of the delighted Betty.

"O-ho!" cried Bob; "then I'll take a canoe."

The other Giant pulled a canoe from his pocket as carelessly as one might take out a lead-pencil, and placed it before Bob.

"Now," said Betty, drawing a long breath, "we have one wish apiece left. What are you going to choose, Bob?"

"I don't know," replied King Bob, whose cup of joy was already brimming over. "What are you?"

"Well," said Betty, who took the matter very seriously for a Queen, "I think I shall take a piano."

"Certainly," said Mumbo Jumbo. "I've only two pockets, and I've emptied them, but I think I have a piano tucked away in my hat. Ah, yes, here it is." And from the crown of his capacious hat he brought forth a beautiful piano.

"Now," said Bob, "as this is my last wish,

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I may as well make it a big one. I will take an automobile."

"All right," said the Giant, cheerfully. And immediately there stood before the astonished Bob a handsome automobile; and though he had no idea how to manage it, he felt sure he could learn.

CHAPTER XX

TWELFTH NIGHT REVELS

SUDDENLY the Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason came bustling up to the twins with an air of great importance.

"Hustle these toys out of the way," they cried, pointing to the gifts the Giants had presented; "the ball is going to begin."

"What ball?" said Bob, who was investigating the working apparatus of his new automobile.

"Why, the Twelfth Night Ball," replied the Lord of Misrule. "Everybody's coming to it. But first a detachment of Queens and Kings will arrive and will pay you their respects."

Reluctantly the twins climbed the steps to the throne and seated themselves.

As a quaint little lady approached, the Lord of Misrule announced:

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“The Queen of Hearts.”

She was gorgeously attired and her costume was thickly sprinkled with red velvet hearts.

“I’ve brought you some tarts,” she said, as she offered a tray to the children. “I would have brought more, but the Knave of Hearts stole the biggest part of the batch. He’s such a rascal! He steals them every time I make them; but he’s always so repentant I can’t help forgiving him, and so we begin all over again. They’re very nice tarts.”

They were very nice tarts, and Bob and Betty ate them with great relish, and invited the Queen of Hearts to sit on the throne beside them. She accepted the invitation, and another great chair was brought, in which her small majesty was ensconced.

There was a sound of music outside, which seemed to be violins playing the merriest sort of music.

“Old King Cole,” announced the Lord of Misrule. And prancing into the room came a fat, jolly figure, followed by three attendants

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who were making fast and furious music on three violins.

King Cole and his fiddlers three bowed low before the King and Queen, and begged the privilege of making music for them. But even while they were playing other Kings and Queens came in so rapidly that Bob and Betty were overwhelmed with salutations and gifts.

There was the King who sat in his counting-house, and he brought them some of his money, while his Queen offered the twins delicious slices of bread and honey.

Then there was King Arthur, who brought them a bag pudding.

But in the crowd Betty soon recognized Queen Mab, and ran gladly to greet her.

"I'm so glad to see you again!" they both cried at once. And in attendance upon the Queen Bob and Betty were delighted to see Robin Goodfellow.

The merry sprite was, as usual, up to his pranks, and he and Will o' the Wisp were soon laying plans to trick and tease all of the guests at the Twelfth Night Ball.

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Carefully looking over the royal ladies of the assemblage, Betty seemed disappointed, and whispered to the Lord of Misrule:

"Where is Queen Dick? Why isn't she here?"

"Oh, she won't come," said the Lord of Misrule; "she never does. Anybody who wants to see Queen Dick must go to her palace."

"Well, I'm going there," said Betty, earnestly, "just as soon as this ball is over."

After the Kings and Queens had all arrived other and less noble guests began to appear. And among them Betty spied the Ragman and his rag baby.

"Come, Bob," she exclaimed, grasping his hand. And they flew across the room to greet their old friend.

"Your Royal Highnesses," said the Ragman, bowing so low that he nearly smothered the rag baby, "I am popularly pleased and parsimoniously proud to perceive you in this exquisite and exigent position. As you no doubt obviously observe, my manners are vastly

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and vivaciously improved, and I now feel able to greet in a worthy manner such grandiloquent grandees as yourselves."

Bob and Betty were much amused by the Ragman's pomposity, and conducting him across the room, gave him a seat of honor among the most noted guests.

The ball was evidently going to be a large one, for the people arrived in throngs. Each new arrival was first presented to Bob and Betty, and then allowed to go where they pleased; but at last a name was called out by the Lord of Misrule which caused Betty to neglect all her other guests.

"The Knight of the Night," was the announcement, as the tall black figure entered the room.

Two springs and a bound, and Betty was in his arms, while Bob clasped his hand and looked up into his kind face.

"Where *have* you been?" cried Betty.
"We've missed you awfully."

"Where *have you* been?" returned the Knight of the Night, smiling. "At any rate,

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN DICK

you seem to have prospered. Where did you get these royal robes?"

"Oh, we're King and Queen," said Bob.

"Indeed," said the Knight of the Night; "then I must have a care to my behavior, or you will have me excommunicated."

"No, we won't," said Betty, patting his cheek; "you can do whatever you wish. But I wish you'd take us to Queen Dick's palace. Aren't we ever going to get there?"

But the Knight of the Night only smiled.

"Oh, what are they doing over there?" cried Bob.

"Playing at snapdragon," replied the Knight of the Night. "Shall we join them?"

The Twelfth Night revels had fairly begun, and the fun waxed fast and furious. Games were played, music sounded, dances were formed, and the Fools and Mummers cut up their merry pranks. The Knight of the Night, notwithstanding his dignified appearance, proved himself as rollicking as anybody, while the Ragman, though merry and gay, was so punctiliously polite that King

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Bob and Queen Betty made him a courtier at once.

As his rags scarcely suited this exalted position, the Lord of Misrule hustled him off to the keeper of the royal wardrobe, who fitted him out in such grand style that the King and Queen could scarcely recognize him.

At last Will o' the Wisp danced up to Queen Betty, and whispering in her ear, said:

"The time draws near."

"What time?" asked Betty, wonderingly.

"The time for the bonfire," said Will o' the Wisp.

"What bonfire?" said Bob, hearing this conversation.

"The burning of the greens," said Will o' the Wisp. "Hurry, everybody, and help take them down."

The great hall was most elaborately trimmed and festooned with ropes and garlands of evergreen. But when everybody set to work these greens were quickly torn down and piled in a great heap in the center of the hall. One after another brought armfuls of the fragrant spruce,

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and pine, and hemlock, and holly, until the pile reached nearly to the ceiling. When the room was stripped entirely bare and the great pile was completed, the Lord of Misrule said, in a loud voice:

“Come one, come all, to the Twelfth Night ring,
For Betty is Queen and Bob is King.
All merrily we’ll dance and sing,
While the cymbals cling! clang! cling!”

“Now,” said the Abbot of Unreason, “the King will light the pile.”

“What with?” said Bob.

“This,” said Will o’ the Wisp, offering his torch.

Bob took it reluctantly.

“It seems a shame,” he said, “to burn up all that beautiful green stuff.”

“I think so, too,” said Betty. “It’s perfectly ridiculous. Don’t you do it, Bob.”

By way of answer the circle of voices chanted:

“Burn the green, the Christmas green,
For Bob is King and Betty is Queen.”

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The children were standing in the ring on either side of the Knight of the Night, and as Bob hesitated the Knight said:

“Touch the torch, dearie.”

Obediently Bob touched the lighted torch to the pile of dry and crackling greens, and they flamed up in a moment.

Bigger and brighter grew the fire, the blaze roared and crackled, and soon clouds of thick white smoke began to roll away from the flaming heap and out through the open doors and windows.

“Bob and Betty,” said the Knight of the Night, in his soft, gentle voice, “if you want to go to Queen Dick’s palace, now is your chance. If you lie upon those soft white pillows of clouds they will float you away to the palace.”

“How do we get on them?” said Betty.

“I will toss you up,” said the Knight of the Night. And taking first Bob and then Betty in his strong arms, he tossed them each on to a big white fluffy cloud-pillow.

The two soft clouds bearing the children

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floated gently out of the windows and away into the blue sky.

Bob and Betty stretched themselves lazily in the soft, downy mass and slowly opened their eyes.

The cloud-beds were side by side, and to the twins' surprise they had little white sheets and fluffy blankets on them.

"Why, Bob," said Betty, "this is our own nursery!"

"So it is!" said Bob, rubbing his eyes. "And there's mamma opening the door. But where's Queen Dick?"

"Queen Dick!" exclaimed mamma, gaily; "there never was any and there never will be any Queen Dick. You'll just have to get along with mother."

"Mothers are better than queens, anyway," said Betty.

"Yes, they are," said Bob.

(1)

THE END

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